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Popper's open society and Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering: A comparison

Marsejl Dhima

MPhil

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Keele University

## Abstract

This thesis aims to stage a productive dialogue between the existentialist philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 -1900) and the socio-scientific philosophy of Karl Popper (1902-1994). I intend to define Popper's open society by presenting his political philosophy as deriving from his philosophy of science. The open society is characterized as a society free from tyranny, tribalism and the type of ideologies which may restrict the individual from making their own decisions. To ensure this Popper advocates what he calls 'piecemeal social engineering' – a process attempting to dismiss historical doctrines enforced by those thinkers he calls "historicists" including those he refers to as "enemies" of the open society, namely Plato, Hegel and Marx. I believe Popper's open society invites 'piecemeal social engineering' as an alternative to the social engineering of the enemies of the open society. His philosophy of social science enables Popper's social engineering philosophy to become combined with the existentialism of Friedrich Nietzsche, which together may empower the open society to gradually become more open than before.

A similar type of social engineering can be found in Nietzsche's philosophy, in particular in his aphoristic work, where he rejects what he perceives as 'polemical', such as the development and endurance of nihilism. Nietzsche presents nihilism as both socially constructed (namely from the Judeo-Christian view of morality) and as a meta-social fact. He advocates an existentialist philosophy which persuades the individual to overcome those elements of life which may foster the destruction of the individual's own values and freedom bestowed by her own existence. The context of Nietzsche's fragmental philosophy I find it to be purporting towards a social engineering which is existentialist by nature. Eventually, it will become apparent in this thesis how the structural correlations between Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* and Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering enable their productive dialogue and a resulting improved account.

To test the strengths of the improved account following from the dialogue I stage between Nietzsche and Popper, I am going to present their philosophies in the context of the current debates on the politics of identity. I am going to do so in order to see how Nietzsche's and Popper's philosophies can be applied in a practical context, and how they may complement each-other in that context. The success will be measured by how much these philosophies can support and enhance progressivism within the identity politics of the open society.

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## Abbreviations

### Primary Literature

C & R - Conjectures and Refutations

Genealogy - On the Genealogy of Morality

Nachlass - A Book by Nietzsche published posthumously by his sister Elisabeth as *The Will to Power*

OS - The Open Society and its Enemies

PH - The Poverty of Historicism

The Two Problems (in quotations) - *The Two Fundamental Problems in the Theory of Knowledge*

TSZ - Thus Spoke Zarathustra

## Abbreviations (continued)

### Reference to Terminology

I have highlighted in italics those terms which can easily confuse the reader if read at face value. The terms highlighted in italic quote terminologies which derive from the primary or secondary literature or by using terminology repetitively.

*Historicism* - The claim that history is determined by its own laws

The *open society* - Popper's own definition of the open society

The *two problems* (not in quotations) - The problem of demarcation and the problem of induction

*Themes* - The list of themes Nietzsche mentions throughout his philosophy, such as: slave morality, nihilism, the revaluation of values, the will to power, eternal recurrence, all-too-human, *Übermensch*, ascetic priest, etc

The *two themes* - Nihilism and the revaluation of values





# Introduction

## Thesis Objective

What can philosophy offer us in the twenty-first century? To be more precise, can the philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Popper provide the contemporary Western society often understood as a liberal, generally just and an open society something to further and sustain its open-ness? Can Nietzsche and Popper offer each-other philosophical support? The objective of this thesis is to answer such questions by incorporating the continental philosophy of Nietzsche with the analytic philosophy of Karl Popper to form a synergy which may come useful in understanding the dynamics of the open Western society and at the same time to be able to enhance its future. The synergy would prove beneficial to the study of philosophy too, which is seen by many as an academic discipline that has succumbed its significance to the growth of scientific knowledge and its support for technological innovation.

Perhaps the study of society at the beginning of a technologically enhanced and open society may be a suitable place to offer philosophy to the outside of academia, in the open society. The notion of an 'open society' is broad and contested amongst scholars. As a first step towards its definition, we can begin by examining its opposite: the 'closed society'. Accordingly, an 'open society' is a society which is not tyrannical or exclusive to a particular group of people; or tribalistic. It instead, prioritises certain principles such as equality, justice, freedom of expression, ownership, being free to make one's own decisions and many more. When looking around the current social events and *phenomena*, we notice the presence of the open society in the form of globalisation, social diversity and liberal democracy. We see all these in the political context of the identity of demographic attributes. However, we also see the open society's challenges, especially when there is a new environment or an old environment with a new understanding. The issues I am going to outline in the open society in this thesis relate to the politics of identity.

Identity politics is often found to be apportioned by individuals whose demographic attributes are concerned with it. There are also others who make their contribution to the elaboration of politics of identity but who do so only in their professional capacity, as academics or politicians. Many philosophers have made various endeavours to understand social *phenomena* and appoint a type of philosophy as an interpretation of its condition and subsequently, its philosophical antidote, where possible. The great works which have made a considerable impact on the study of society and which also have offered some form of social engineering originate not only from philosophy (e.g., Plato's *Republic* or the works of Karl Marx) but from other spheres of scholarly work, including the Bible. In the case of philosophy, thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Popper have offered to contribute to social science by positioning some form of social engineering. The social engineer's task often appears to be more visible than their intention for proposing their social engineering. That is: attempting to understand the collective behaviour of a group of people, which inevitably leads to the disclosure of the group's ethos and the present and foreseeable problems associated with it. Eventually, the social engineer tries to find a solution for a particular issue, which usually culminates around (the two vital necessities: security and economy) the intention to maximise social interaction to preserve peace or to increase the society's economic prosperity and its distribution.

Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies will be presented as philosophical social engineering to be deployed into the current debates of the politics of identity for the thesis to be able to test the extent to which these two philosophies can be beneficial to the open society as well as to one-another. I shall present the philosophies of both thinkers gradually in the thesis, but what should be highlighted at this point is the content of their works, which eventually develops into social engineering along the thesis. Outlining Popper's philosophy will become an easier task than that of Nietzsche. This is because Popper overtly describes his philosophy of science which is expressly based on what Popper calls: 'the two fundamental problems in the theory of knowledge' with the problem of demarcation and the problem of induction<sup>1</sup>.

The growth of socio-scientific knowledge happens under similar circumstances. One major difference between the challenges in science and social science is that the latter's progress is faltered by those thinkers who can negatively influence society by promoting closed societies. Popper's philosophy of science excels only as a critique of the purveyors of the closed society. From this point, Popper offers his own notion of an open society. He does so by rejecting the claims of "purveyors" such as those he calls historicists, as well as others he refers to as "the enemies of the open society" (notably, Plato, Hegel and Marx) (*OS* volumes I & II). In response to historicist doctrines, Popper introduces what he calls "piecemeal social engineering". (*OS* v I & *PH*) Such social engineering allows Popper to reach his objectives of defining the open society and the mechanism of keeping it open (*piecemeal social engineering*), which according to him is executed by the falsification of ideologies and statements which are false, prophetic, and more importantly which have been tried and failed.

This thesis has a more advanced task than presenting Nietzsche in the same way as Popper. His fragmental works are not sufficiently consolidated into a rigid and heavily self-defended philosophical practice. It is the reader's task to group his aphorisms, fragments and philosophical themes from his works in order to be able to build a strong argument on behalf of Nietzsche. It is essential to do so when trying to determine how Nietzsche might have a philosophy and even more so when trying to align his re-constituted philosophy with that of Popper's. As mentioned earlier, Popper's philosophy shows a harmonious consistency which enables some elements of his philosophy to determine others such as his philosophy of science underpinning his philosophy of social science.

Furthermore, defining a Nietzschean philosophy is of the utmost importance when trying to arrive at a Nietzschean existentialist social engineering philosophy. The thesis has as one of its objectives, finding a justification for re-structuring Nietzsche's works necessary for engaging Nietzsche into a dialogue with Popper and identity politics. Nietzsche often presents *themes* throughout his works such as nihilism, the revaluation of values, the *Übermensch*, the will to power, the free spirit, master and slave morality, resentment, and many others. The rationale in question would be to argue that since many fragments and *themes* in Nietzsche's philosophy are found to be repetitions of other fragments, and whilst other fragments, on the other hand, stand in a preceding or superseding relation to one another, it may be possible to discover a structure in Nietzsche's fragments purporting towards a consolidated philosophy. In hindsight,

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<sup>1</sup> For Popper, scientific statements must be empirically testable and that makes it possible for such statements to be rejected as false. For as long as this is possible, an empirical statement is said to be falsifiable. Popper only permits falsifiable statements to be deemed scientific and to do so the scientist must demarcate between scientific and non-scientific statements by judging against the principle of demarcation to determine if an empirical statement can be falsifiable. It is only by virtue falsification of empirical statements which allow the growth of scientific knowledge maintains Popper.

we see Nietzsche's fragments and *themes* to be of three-fold nature: Presented as polemical; as descriptive and as prescriptive. I intend to centralise some of Nietzsche's key claims into the three groups above and subsequently investigate the relationship between the polemical groups and the proscriptive groups. This encounter will be able to show how the prospective *themes* and fragments respond to the polemics. The interaction between the two may shed light into an elusive structure within Nietzsche's works. Likewise, I shall also investigate the relationship between *themes* which are prescriptive and the descriptive ones. The distinction between the two will be able to show the limits of Nietzsche's philosophy, which in turn determines what parts of his philosophy are worthy of being selected for existentialist social engineering.

One of the endeavours in this thesis is to convince the reader that Nietzsche indeed has a philosophical process in his works in the form I have pointed out above, which has as an aim describing social change and at the same time prescribing ways of living with oneself in the most sincere and life-promoting of ways. Nietzsche's promotion of the individual's freedom will simultaneously boost the freedom of society as a whole towards a more open society than before. To illustrate this, I will show in the thesis how Nietzsche's philosophical process culminates at the introduction of the *Übermensch*. If the thesis succeeds in establishing a convincing argument, according to which Nietzsche's existentialist philosophy is also able to offer sufficient social engineering for the progress of the open society, then the final goal is to put Nietzsche's 'existentialist social engineering' to the test. This is to see how it might promote an open society *per se* on the one hand and just as importantly, how it relates to Popper's *piecemeal social engineering*.

Eventually, it will become apparent whether or not there is any synergy from incorporating both philosophies. In order to determine the strengths of such synergy, I am going to put this argument to an empirical test. Partly because Popper will only admit socio-scientific statements to be empirically testable and falsifiable, but mainly because (as mentioned at the beginning of this introduction) the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper may have something to contribute to the contemporary Western open society with philosophies presented in the form of social engineerings existentialist and "piecemeal". The Western open society in this thesis will be presented in the way of a historical process purely as an unintended social *phenomenon* which is generally welcomed by the individuals. The open society also allows the human agency to intentionally preserve and enhance it according to the individuals' motivations which are deemed virtuous, such as democracy, social justice, equality and the growth of empirical knowledge and the individual's intellect.

The open society implies many different aspects of social open-ness. I am going to look at the open society from the point of view of the politics of identity as introduced earlier on. In this case, the politics of identity is defined as the politics involved when there is a difference in demographic attributes such as gender, sexuality, social class, race, religion, disability, age, etc. Many argue that the variation in demographic attributes is proportional to the variation of freedom and power. This is particularly problematic as the nature of power in a social sense is such that it often results in a zero-sum game. The issues regarding the politics of identity have become increasingly obvious and abundant in the present day. Also, concerns about such issues have been voiced louder than ever before. An all-inclusive society which is a society akin to the open society or even a type of an open society in itself must be able to treat all the individuals and groups thereof, equally. Rights, opportunities, welfare provisions, etc ought to be equally distributed so that no backlog of power difference builds up amongst demographic groups and thus no power difference and injustice amongst individuals.

However, no society is without a power difference amongst demographic attributes and therefore no society is quite an open one. The problem is thus two-fold, as caused by structure and agency<sup>2</sup>. What is worth mentioning at this stage is that the structure of social injustice is defined as a structure of demographic normativity. Such normativity assumes that society consists of only a certain group of people and deliberately or not freedom and power are distributed according to the demographic attributes. Examples in the Western world include patriarchalism, heteronormativity, cis-gendered normativity, white normativity, Christian normativity, middle and upper-class normativity, ableist normativity, etc.

This type of normativity forms a tribal characterization whereby only its members are given the most privilege. Those who are not sharing such privileges are often found to be oppressed, marginalized, deprived and/or disadvantaged. The awareness to such social issues takes the form of polemic raising and often such polemics are addressed with revolt. This is not to say that campaigners of social justice commit to acts of violence when trying to raise awareness, but campaigners revolt, however peacefully in the form of deliberate and temporary exclusion to positively break away from the camouflage of normativity. This is done so to raise awareness of diversity in order to overcome normativity. However, when social dissolution occurs the society is then transformed from being seen as one tribe to being seen as many tribes, each representing a demographic attribute which in hindsight transition the society from a closed society to a society made of smaller groups of closed societies. Many campaigners see the emergence of this (poly-tribalism) as an intended end which must be maintained indefinitely and as a prize which must be preserved.

It is precisely at this point that social engineering of Nietzsche and Popper must be brought into the debate of identity politics. This is because the open society risks becoming less-open both by way of polarisation of society as well as by means of fictitious polemics, which may emerge alongside genuine ones. Popper's open society is an ever opening one which is perpetuated by *piecemeal social engineering*. To apply this to the actuality of "poly-tribalism" it would mean to reject some of the claims such as poly-tribalism's prophetic appeal (namely that poly-tribalism must be embraced indefinitely and must not be subject to scrutiny or change). Popper would prefer to see poly-tribalism as falsifiable and as part of the growth of knowledge and freedom, to be slowly made obsolete. Nietzsche at this point would prescribe the process of nihilism and 'the revaluation of values' in order to orient the poly-tribalism into higher values and to subsequently allow the concept of the *Übermensch* to take the society a step further into the openness. In which case, from the stage of poly-tribalism to the stage of individuality. The only support Nietzsche gives at this stage to the members of the same group of the newly revaluated values of tolerance and all-inclusivity is guidance. *Übermensch* as the overcomer is the guidance Nietzsche gives to the open society and because such guidance is distributed individually instead of collectively it is existentialist by means of individual appeal. I am going to argue that society progresses into openness through a breakdown (fission) of larger social structures of identity into smaller ones all the way to personal identity.

My argument is that when inviting Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* into the debate on the future of the politics of identity, Popper contributes sufficiently by prescribing that such a

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<sup>2</sup> Social injustice is brought about by an agency when an individual or individuals perpetuate social injustice. Structural social injustice has an autonomous presence in a society without any effort from the agency. Many human rights activists maintain that awareness of social injustice must be able to influence agency and as a result, alter the structure.

society can progress the same way as science does. Likewise, Nietzsche's philosophical process allows for diversity to attain its merits by revaluating the values of society. By annihilating (nihilism will be mentioned in great detail in the thesis) social claims that prove life-negating (including the negation of life which derives from being oppressed, marginalised, deprived or disadvantaged) to the individual in this case, the individual of demographic diversity. The *Übermensch* makes the individual solitary and by so being the individual becomes the overcomer of many things. The notion of 'overcoming' will be discussed in great detail as Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering assigns the individual with a number of different tasks all of which are in themselves a form of overcoming. For instance, solitude helps the individual overcome tribalism, it also helps the individual become less reliant on society, which enables her to develop skills of overcoming those problems which the society or third-party advise cannot reach out to, including the many problems which reside within the self.

Nietzsche and Popper as illustrated above, make a sufficient academic contribution to the individual both by collective and individual appeal. Also that, both figures by being present in the open society hasten the process of opening up the society, each in their own way. This may not be sufficient in confirming that there can be a synergy between the two without outlining and testing common similarities in the philosophies and both philosophers. It is precisely the second part of this introduction that describes the methodology I intend to follow during the thesis which requires a symmetric exposition of the philosophical processes of Nietzsche and Popper.

## Methodology

The structure of this thesis is set out to critically introduce the relevant works of Nietzsche and Popper, which may reveal a philosophical project in the form of a social engineering philosophy. Despite the politics of identity not being the centrepiece of the thesis, I am going to present an infusion of the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper in the presence of the current debates surrounding the politics of identity which will be introduced at the beginning of the thesis. This also means that the philosophies which have as an aim their corresponding approach to social engineering, existentialist and 'piecemeal' respectively, will first be evaluated against an empirical situation of the current debates on the politics of identity and the subsequently some theoretical testing will be approached. The purpose of testing the affinity of Nietzsche and Popper theoretically is to provide maximum strength to my argument that the two philosophers have a discerning similarity in understanding the process of historical change. It may later prove to be the case both thinkers prescribe a similar philosophy to society in the form of social engineering. I will support this argument by looking at both philosopher's works in retrospect when backing my argument and at the same time, prospectively presenting their philosophical development into their social engineering as emerging from their criticism.

Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies arise as reactions of what they saw as problematic in their time. For Popper, it is the *logical positivist* understanding of the growth of scientific knowledge as proportional to empirical testing. Popper rejects this theory and instead claims that growth scientific knowledge derives from falsification of corroborated hypotheses. Nietzsche does the same, he criticises Christian ethics and its legacy and the 'morbid preoccupation' with absolute truths, as damaging to the individual. Instead he proposes *perspectivism* and persistent attempts to "revalue" values from those values which are life-negating to the individual. Nietzsche also points out at the values which in the past might have had some significance but which subsequently have lost their worth, to a new set of values which according to Nietzsche are

measured in terms of how much freedom and power or 'will-to-power' they provide the individual with.

The responses to the pre-existing polemics are initially presented in a controversial manner. Solutions often emerge in the form of 'heresies', which challenge the *status quo* and eventually become generally accepted as the new 'orthodox' way of life. Nietzsche's and Popper's social philosophies follow a similar approach by challenging the *status quo* and then by demanding to abolish what they believe to be harmful to society. If we turn to the contents of the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper, we may be able to find how their philosophies came about heretically and how (more importantly) they have been transformed from an "antithesis" in relation to a particular social polemic, to a new orthodoxy, which promises to promote and maintain open societies. The process of orthodoxy and heresy supports the social engineering of Nietzsche and Popper in becoming incorporated into the open society. To use demographic diversity as the open society, this means that Nietzsche and Popper's social engineerings may prove successful in identifying and flourishing the ever opening open society as a progressive process of orthodoxy and heresy.

The way to flourish the open society is to demarcate between factually valid and invalid polemics. The open society is prone to becoming misused to the advantage of many individuals and groups who promote factitious polemics. The risks which may arise as a result of factitious polemics are such that by virtue of them being non-scientific they are not compatible with *piecemeal social engineering*. Furthermore, since the factitious polemics cannot be falsified, we cannot know exactly how polemical they are if polemical at all. As a result, it risks causing both a revolt from previous orthodoxies and conservative forms of tribalism as well as a bi-polarisation. The smaller groups become incorporated into one large tribe to revolt against the pre-existing tribe and thus form a bi-polarisation of two opposing tribes or two closed societies. By virtue of being as potent as one another the two closed societies could risk taking the open society deeper into close-ness. Nietzsche's process, on the other hand, supports the elimination of fictitious polemics. When looking at *On Genealogy of Morals* (1887) we find that Nietzsche controversially treats morality as motivated by resentment. It does not mean to suggest diversity groups are resentful to normative groups. In the realm of social injustice, it instead tries to highlight a demarcation between genuine and factitious polemics which go hand in hand with Popper's own findings.

## **Chapter 1: The Nature of Social Philosophy**

Philosophy has a two-fold sphere of interest: to philosophise about natural phenomena and social phenomena. In the former case, natural phenomena include concepts of time and space, metaphysical claims about the universe, epistemology, logic, the afterlife and God. In the latter case, phenomena include philosophy of science, mind, language, political philosophy, values and individual existence. Many thinkers find studying social phenomena more challenging than natural ones. This is because the variables of the latter are less stable than the former but which are also subject to context and subjective judgement. To existentialist philosopher Søren Kierkegaard truth is subjectivity. In hindsight, the distinction of between natural and social phenomena must, therefore, purport towards a difference in the essence of the ontology and methodology between the two. For instance research on social science requires qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of social reality, which is not the case with research on natural phenomena usually in the realm of the so-called STEM subjects (an abbreviation for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

Over the many centuries of the history of philosophy, many irregularities in the realm of methodology and ontology of the study of natural and social phenomena have taken place. For instance with the decline of the belief in the God of classical theism (the monotheistic God that is understood to have the divine attributes of benevolence, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, etc) in the Western world, the focus of theologian has shifted from treating claims about the existence of God as a natural phenomenon to that of a social one. The arguments for the existence of God such as the ontological, cosmological and design arguments on the one hand, and looking at the possible evidence for God's existence on the other, such as the possibility of miracles and religious experience are no longer at the centre of attention for the theologian or philosopher of religion. Instead, such academics critically assess how belief in the God of classical theism has come about and what such beliefs could say about the society which solicits such claims. In other words, academics have relocated the study of previously natural phenomena into the social domain.

Similarly, social phenomena for many thinkers observed like natural phenomena. Here we see a shift from the subjective to the objective. One classic example is the theoretical evolution of the study of mental health. Previously, eccentric behaviour was seen as a subjective and personal characteristic, and with the growth of scientific knowledge, mental health experts have been able to give such characteristics of behaviour a diagnosis. In this way, our perception of mental phenomena has become understood in objective terms. As a result, social philosophy is now able to encompass the methodologies which have been applied separately to the study of natural and social phenomena.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we have seen the incorporation of the two methodologies above into the history of philosophy. This has led to a division of philosophy into two philosophical traditions: the analytic and the continental traditions. The analytic tradition is concerned primarily with the analysis of language and the logical consistency of statements. The continental tradition focuses on analysing the subjective aspects of the social world. This thesis will try to merge the two schools of thought where Popper belongs to the analytic

tradition and Nietzsche to the continental. Regardless of the school of thought, the thesis will be able to embrace from the methodologies of both schools of thought. There is no apparent incompatibility with the dialogue between the two schools, through Nietzsche and Popper. The aim is to produce a 'synergy' between the two thinkers, which also implies the convergence of the two schools of thought should, it too provide with a 'synergy' to the latter. This is important to mention at this stage when giving a detailed account of the nature and purpose of social philosophy as the thesis itself tries to construct a method in which social philosophy can apply to outspoken issues such as those found in the contemporary politics of identity. Social philosophy, in this case, the political thought of Popper and the existentialism of Nietzsche should be able to critically engage within the current debates on the politics of identity. By so doing, these philosophies contribute intellectually to the promotion of the open society and in return may receive some positive acclaim beyond academia.

### **The Role of Social Philosophy in the Thesis**

Now that we have elaborated on the nature of social philosophy *per se*, it is time to present social philosophy in relation to the thesis. It should serve as a prerequisite for the presentation of Nietzsche and Popper to bridge both philosophers' work with socio-political debates. In turn, it would allow for both philosophies to be put to the test outside of academia so that we can see if they can contribute to the debates on the politics of identity. Nietzsche and Popper's works, as a result, must be re-defined such that it appeals to the individual's self-determination and their place within the society. The way to do so is to attribute the works of the two philosophers a political dimension. If we are to look at the social philosophies of both Nietzsche and Popper, we would be able to see some content of political nature. The political dimension in question will be revealed when outlining their philosophical development of social change from their literature, namely Nietzsche's *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* and Popper's process for the open society through *piecemeal social engineering*.

Finding a political context in their works implies that, the two philosophers may have had some intention for politicising some of their philosophy and in this way, offering an exoteric appeal to the individual. Popper, for instance, does so by giving his philosophy of science a social dimension. He translates his social philosophy in terms of the issues scientists face in their profession when cultivating scientific knowledge. Popper maintains that the social phenomena, to some extent can be treated similarly to natural phenomena and at the same time being aware of the difference in variables between the two. Likewise, Nietzsche, takes forward his existentialist philosophy into at least, a quasi-political dimension by giving his philosophy a social appeal but not necessarily a mass appeal. This is particularly evident in his opposition to the Judaeo-Christian legacy and perhaps his 'political programme' of the promotion of the *Übermensch*.

In hindsight, however political Nietzsche and Popper may sound, their philosophies need to be adopted in a way that it enables us to apply such philosophies to the outside of academia. It would be insufficient to scrutinise their philosophies in a social context without defining their stance in the social world. For this reason, Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies will be interpreted as a means to outlining, scrutinising and supervising social change. Their philosophies allude to social phenomena which at times are regarded as factual and other times as polemical. It is precisely the identification of the 'political' in the philosophies of Nietzsche



and Popper, which will be presented below with a view to determining a stance from the two philosophers within the social phenomena of identity politics. The standpoints of the two philosophers within the politics of identity will become apparent when presenting the relevant philosophical material of the two philosophers later on in the thesis in the form of social and historical development.

In order to present Nietzsche and Popper's work so that they can coincide with what their philosophies seek to achieve, their works must be excavated in the context of social change. By so doing, this may allow the testability of both philosophies' compatibility to one another as well as the compatibility of their philosophical process to the historical process of the politics of identity.

## **Chapter 2: Introduction to Politics of Identity**

The politics of identity encompasses political concerns most relevant to groups of distinctive demographic attributes. Before we proceed any further, we must define what politics or "the political" is in this case. This is a social concept of understanding the relationship between social structures. It includes social class and ethnic identity. The main focus appears to lie on the difference in freedom and power and the power struggle between social groups. Broadly speaking, social structures consist of individuals who within a given society carry attributes such that place a sense of belonging to the individual by common aims, beliefs, desires and struggles and demographic similarities. In this way, political identity forms by re-grouping society into categories of people.

So far, we note that politics emphasises the notion of belonging and upon that notion it seeks to distribute freedom and power accordingly. Historically speaking, politics has focused primarily on the distinction of groups of people according to their social class and ethnicity. In liberal democracies, where the people are free to elect their government, electoral success often depends on what the political candidates can offer to a particular group. Whether a particular group feels favoured by the candidate and able to receive more provisions whether that be ideological or welfare (materialist). It gives the individual the reason to favour one political party over the other. When looking at international politics as well as the domestic ones, we find a similar structure. Political representatives of a particular group (in which case a nation-state or an ethnic region) lobby to achieve the goals which are usually pledged for democratic elections to the people whom they represent.

### **New Branch of Politics?**

We already notice at this stage that, some form of belonging and affiliation become the centrepiece of "doing politics". In other words, politics is done on demand. Since the 1960s liberation rights movements, politics has reached an additional dimension. Politics according to the identities of demographic attributes other than ethnicity and social class have become as mainstream as the politics of social class and ethnicity. We are seeing a new wave of politics which has eclipsed from our attention the traditional preoccupation of politics on social class and ethnicity in particular. Some scholars treat the politics of identity as a new branch of politics with its focus switched from social class and ethnicity to other demographic attributes such as: race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, ability, age, etc. Others maintain that the political development of identity has merely extended to more interest groups than the social classes and ethnic groups. Though it is hard to disagree with the latter for as much as social and ethnic groups are also demographic attributes, the latter does incorporate new methodologies for practicing politics. One of which is making the society generally more woke or alert of injustice amongst different demographic groups. This is particularly endeavoured by usually, members of a certain group who raise awareness of oppression, marginalisation, deprivation and being disadvantaged, usually through activism. The awareness, in this case, is two-fold: aesthetic and ethic.

In the case of the 'ethical' awareness, we find that individuals who identify or belong to a particular group, seek for their demographic attributes to be conspicuous in the society with an aim to identify the underlying current and historical oppression and marginalisation of such group. Woke attitudes inform the society towards a consensus that a particular group is not treated equally as other groups. As a result of both, agent-based intentional discrimination or structure-based discrimination. Woke-ness engineers the society such that it allows for the decline of the social structure which permits discrimination to flourish (in the case of structural discrimination). Likewise, the protection of agent-based discrimination is enforced by law. One good example is the classification of certain offences as hate crimes.

Likewise, 'aesthetic' awareness is aimed at permitting the individual to choose their own demographic identity without necessarily a sense of woke-ness. The aesthetic awareness is not concerned with ethical matters such as social injustice or discrimination (though related to the ethical context), but it simply informs the society that there are more identity groups than the society identifies. While some identities have always been present in society, its individuals have not yet had the opportunity to manifest their own identity. On other occasions, human endeavours such as globalisation have too brought about new identities within a certain place.

### **Liberation Groups as Open Society**

Having discussed the ethic and aesthetic need for identity, the question which arises at this stage is: Why is identity so important within a society? One obvious answer derives from the two paragraphs above. First, the individual is entitled to choose their identity and for this reason, they are within their own right to do so. Second, there is also a need (and in some cases an urgent one) to acknowledge the individual's identification within a certain group to raise awareness of the past and present social injustice to the individuals concerned. It would not be possible to address instances of oppression and marginalisation without, first, identifying that certain groups are oppressed and/or marginalised. Second, that, certain individuals belong to such groups and thus such people become oppressed and/or marginalised. Woke-ness is part of progressivism and the opening up of the society.

The reason why the discussion within the thesis has shifted from a philosophical to a political one is that as mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, philosophy's aim in the thesis is to promote itself within the current debates in society. Furthermore, the aim is also to test the validity of some of the key claims and philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper against social phenomena, including the components which open and maintain the open society. For this reason, the notion of the open society (which is also the centrepiece of the thesis) presupposes a society which is either free from social injustice or is endeavouring to address social injustice. By 'open society' Popper refers to the Western societies and liberal democracies alike. It is expected that liberal democracies have been or are in the process of opening and keeping open the society.

The process of opening up the society, in hindsight, persuades the individual to conclude that the open society is an open, all-inclusive and a tolerant one where the individual 'is confronted with decision making' (OS, PH) and whose decisions aid to further their freedom and access what life bestows the individual with (Nietzsche). If the latter is to flourish as a result of the

former, it would need a reduction of a particular group to the sum of all its individuals instead of being one group. It has become obvious at this stage that social injustice is 'twice' as unjust as it neither treats groups of individuals equally amongst other groups on the one hand and on the other (and as a result) it does not treat individuals equally amongst other individuals of all groups as "the political" is also "the personal". This may be because the demographic attributes are at least partly responsible for the individual's inability to have an equal share of entitlements and rights. What the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper can do, is that they directly appeal to the individual and their concerns with social injustice. Nietzsche offers existentialist philosophy and through his philosophy invites the individual to share Nietzsche's advice on how to master the values of the individual, both which originate from within and outside of herself. Popper, on the other hand, appeals to the individual by presenting the open society as a substance-less society which is ever opening, and which allows for social justice to flourish.

It would not be sufficient, however, to address social injustice by simply pointing out at the problem without actually having a considerable plan of action. Without which, even the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper will not be able to engage with the open society. One of the biggest challenges with opening up the society through woke-ness, may easily result in polarisation of opposing opinions between being woke and seeing woke-ness as an exaggeration. Some polarised opinions make claims which though for the benefit of the demographic groups concerned, offer an opposite approach to the solution. One of the claims maintains that since we see in society demographic attributes which are immune from oppression, marginalisation and discrimination, such groups should, therefore, seek an assimilation into the society and perhaps, social mobility. By so doing the individual of these groups will identify with the rest of the society which also incorporates other groups too. One classic example of such an argument is the one for social mobility. This is an attempt to promote the individual in to a economically emancipated class usually by acquisition of skills or social affiliation. Those in favour of social assimilation maintain that the same should apply not necessarily to all, but to many different identity groups. Assimilation may be able to solve the "ethnic" problem as outlined above but it creates another problem by exacerbating it. That of the 'aesthetic' problem.

In this event, assimilation supporters point out that for as long as there is no demographic difference, the recently assimilated individual should not face the kind of marginalisation, oppression and disadvantage they might have experienced hitherto. By so doing, the individual's identity diminishes, and that leads to the 'aesthetic polemic'. What identity politics movements have been able to do is to distance themselves from the mainstream identity namely the identity of normativism. In this case, normativism normalises a traditional and common form of identity either as agent-based or structure-based. There are several reasons why normativism may prove polemical. In practice, normativism undermines a particular liberation group's need for awareness-raising to address social injustice. Normativism is by nature favouritist as it is more compatible with those whose demographic attributes resemble a particular normativist identity, i.e. patriarchy or white-ness in the Western world. Normativism is also reluctant to social change and thus conservative. The progressivism towards opening up and maintaining the open society are not compatible with normativism. As a result, normativism reveals itself in the form of 'tribalism'. This is when individuals merge in society under their common aims and who also incorporate their previous identities into one.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, polemics of identity politics arise when there is an inability to be self-represented with one's own pre-existing identity or by an emerging one. Normativism in this case though monistic by nature does not seek to promote merely one universal demographic attribute to which everyone should assimilate into, but it seeks to preserve an orthodoxy of identities such as male-centricity, white-centricity, cis-gender-centricity, hetero-centricity, ableist-centricity, bourgeois-centricity, etc. The focal point of normativism is in its orthodoxy rather than in the incorporation of one single identity, which therefore is not rooted within one universal attribute but in its history itself and the arrest of social change. A member of a liberation group may find it helpful to visualise normativism as incarnated into an individual who must be ideologically opposed and defeated. However, no individual with such a demographic attribute can exist. As a result, the revolt of liberation groups is carried out separately according to the demographic attribute in question. But this does not seem to always be the case as liberation groups' polemics have substantial similarities with one another such as common aims and enemies. It in turn allows for normativism to acquire a universal orthodox character in a form of one tribe or 'mono-tribalism'.

### **Clash of Tribes**

Mono-tribalism, as mentioned above, is empowered by its reluctance for social change. The open society, for it to flourish, requires social justice (ethical polemic) and all-inclusivity (ethical and aesthetic polemic). It will later be noted why Nietzsche and Popper may find mono-tribalism problematic and a hindrance to their philosophical project for the society. But for now, normativism must be presented by the form of mono-tribalism. It is important to view normativism as mono-tribalist as it enables us to see to liberation groups stand in relation to mono-tribalism and in relation to one another. In face of mono-tribalism, the sum of all liberation groups take the form of 'poly-tribalism'. In hindsight this may problematic because, like mono-tribalism, it takes the form of a closed society but made up of many smaller closed societies. Furthermore, the clash of 'tribalisms' becomes even a greater threat to the open society than before.

The monistic characterisation of normativism would not appear consistent within the possibility for a conflict between poly-tribalism and mono-tribalism as two similar but opposite groups. If it was, it would imply that mono-tribalism refers to one universal demographic and poly-tribalism relates to the pluralism of many demographics which then mutinise together against mono-tribalism. As we established earlier, no individual can carry a universal demographic attribute on mono-tribalism. The closest to that description would be an individual who possesses the sum of all demographic attributes favoured by normativity. But poly-tribalism cannot re-group normativity into one demography in order to bring it to social justice. Finding a methodology for establishing a constructive revolt against mono-tribalism is not straightforward. Any statement that claims to enable poly-tribalism to defeat mono-tribalism should be empirically tested. The politics of identity is still in its elementary stage in history and social change takes time.

Another concern with finding a suitable method for which poly-tribalism may succeed in challenging *mono-tribalist normativism* lies in the former's nature, which is that, poly-tribalism is by definition tribalist. If we are to seek an open society on the one hand and promote some form of tribalism (poly-tribalism in this case) on the other, we find a closed society made of a small number of little open societies but which holistically amount to a closed society. Could we say that perhaps once normative mono-tribalism is defeated, then poly-tribalism will choose to

disappear. An example of this would be, for a female feminist to say that once women/female people are treated equally to men male/people, then they would no longer remain feminist but only female. It would seem that some tribalisms (including poly-tribalism) will not be disposed of anytime soon. For as long as this is the case, then poly-tribalism would retain its tribalist nature for as long as it is open to its own scrutiny. The way to utilise poly-tribalism is to address the concerns with a sense of urgency. It would seem that the most urgent response is to place poly-tribalism on a par with mono-tribalism. But it would be too easy for poly-tribalism to adopt a monistic approach to re-grouping itself into one 'tribe' so that it can be on a par with normative mono-tribalism, and thus establishing a new and diverse quasi-normativity. By so doing, an inter-tribal clash between two tribes is established. But such as re-affiliation of liberation groups into a duo-tribalist conflict is not without problems.

First of all, a unified poly-tribalism demarcates the close relationship between 'ethical' and 'aesthetic' polemics. This is a problem as it undermines the need for a progressivist social change, which in turn weakens the focus on challenging *mono-tribalist normativism*. When demarcated, it tackles ethical polemics without the aesthetic ones. As a result, It does not divide polemics according to their demographics. When aesthetic polemics are tackled separately from the ethic ones, the former unwittingly presents the revolt as a matter choice between the two tribes. Since it lacks urgency and its ethical character, its success will be dependent upon the quantitative support rather than qualitative causes. Moreover, a monistic poly-tribalism offers no guarantee to defeating *mono-tribalistic normativism*. It can easily divide the society's public opinion into two opposite camps which lead to the polarisation of the society. A polarised society is not compatible with the open society. Also, it creates a tension within the polarised society where the outcome is unpredictable and which risks creating new support for normativism. Furthermore, monist poly-tribalism unwittingly justifies normativity where motives for conflict are only motivated by content not structure and can easily be seen as arbitrary. This, in turn, leads to another problem which is that it overlooks the main reason why normativity is polemical. *Mono-tribalist normativism* arrests social change whilst maintaining its monistic character. Finally, it goes against the way in which society opens up (this will be particularly apparent in Popper's interpretation of the open society).

The way to disentangle the issues identified with a monistic-type poly-tribalism, within a 'duo-tribalistic' contest, is to address the concerns by means of trying to eliminate the need for a duo-tribalistic model of conflict in the first place. This is because it is precisely by way of rejecting normativism, (mono-tribalism) that we can have an ever-expanding diversity (poly-tribalism) within the society. To use a few examples, it is only by challenging patriarchy that we can talk about not only the rights of women but also the right of individuals who are not cis-gendered. Likewise, it is only through challenging ableist-normativity that we can talk about the diversity of disability. It is simply not the case that only those individuals who have apparent mobility issues are disabled. We are becoming increasingly more aware of other types of disability including mental disability. The same can be said of sexuality, religion, etc. Poly-tribalism must be able to preserve its pluralist character and to do so is to challenge *mono-tribalist normativism* with its own method of plurality rather than imitating the latter. The pluralist character justifies the motives for change as outlined above, and to do so it must incorporate the ethical and aesthetic polemics. The synergy of the two supports one another and the liberation cause. It promotes diversity within *progressivist poly-tribalism* and at the same time it sets out the group-specific polemics. It makes

sense to say, for poly-tribalism to succeed, it must be able to drag mono-tribalism to the point of no return, which in turn would send itself to the point of no return too.

A progressivist process of opening up the society may be able to do just that. The aim for the rest of thesis is to accompany along the way of the opening of the society, the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper. It will become evident how the two philosophies support the progressivist cause for an open and ever opening society.

### **Chapter 3: Preparing Philosophy for the Politics of Identity**

So far we have discussed how the politics of identity emerge within the public life, but without alluding to how its future might unfold. From this part of the thesis on, the presentation of the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper will be presented with a view to incorporating their philosophies within the identity politics debates. I am going to present in parallel the gradual developments of the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper with a view to support the main two arguments in the thesis, which are: Nietzsche and Popper have enough in common with one another. Also that, the mutual aspects of Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies can synergise to support the idea of the open society from the viewpoint of identity politics. I strongly believe that the philosophical development of Nietzsche and Popper take the form of a gradual and piecemeal open-ness as social philosophies. By presenting the two philosophies in such a manner, we would be able to build an argument in support of the future possibilities of the course of identity politics as a project, in the terms of Nietzsche and Popper, namely through Popper's piecemeal social engineering and Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch*.

Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies will be presented in a similar form to that of the emanation of identity politics - as a reaction to the status quo. It should become clear below how their philosophies have developed, which is mainly through criticism. Nietzsche and Popper have sought to disclose those elements which they believed to be some of the fundamental problems in philosophy and society, such as the theory of knowledge and the individual's freedom. In hindsight, it may be easy to picture the similarities between their philosophies and the politics of identity at least in the way in which they emanate. The compatibility of the two philosophies with one another as well as with the politics of identity, will be proportional to the strength of the argument that seeks to extent the two philosophies as a type of social engineering into the politics of identity. Such a social engineering will be developed from the convergence of the two philosophical processes: Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering and Popper's *piecemeal social engineering*.

#### **Critique of Metaphysics: A Demarcation**

I am going to first reveal the philosophical process of Popper's foundations of his philosophy. He is well known for his critical philosophy of science. Popper has offered a "grand narrative" in his philosophy and has been able to retain it throughout his philosophy and irrespective of the focus of his work (whether we are looking at his philosophy of science or his political philosophy). According to this narrative, a generalization, which plays the role of an explanatory hypothesis, must not be accepted as a verified conclusion. The intention for presenting Popper's philosophy of science is to investigate the extent to which Popper's philosophy of science permeates his political philosophy, in order to make evident the



methodology Popper uses to arrive at his idea of the open society<sup>3</sup>. This methodology revolves around the rejection of generalizations, which are empirically unverifiable. It is the theorists' drive to make knowledge claims about science and politics with great certainty and to accept their own certainties without the possibility of testing them that Popper finds problematic.

Popper's main aim in his philosophy of science is to make a number of clarifications concerning the way the scientific method must be viewed. His philosophy is critical by nature, as he is frequently concerned with trying to criticize and evaluate previous claims or what he calls critical rationalism. Hypothetical claims include those which may appear as epistemologically presumptuous, particularly those claims which are falsified by empirical observations (and thus lead to false conclusions) and those claims which cannot be falsified or confirmed through empirical observations (and are, thus, speculative). Popper's critical philosophy takes the form of presenting a justification as to why it might be worth becoming aware of one's fallibility. He presents this through what he calls the two problems of knowledge: the problem of demarcation and the problem of induction. These problems will be elaborated further below, but prior to that it is important to outline Popper's stance on empirical knowledge.

T. E. Burke points out that Popper does not see science as a type of institution which seeks to find truth. Instead it seeks to find a reliable and accurate interpretation of facts. It does not guarantee absolute accuracy or reliability but at least it attempts to seek clarification and to find a method of systematically approaching truth. Vaclav Havel a former Czech president once famously claimed: 'Keep the company of those who seek truth and run away from those who claim to have found it'. To some extent Havel's statement summarizes Popper's treatment of the theory of knowledge. Popper believes that we cannot attain scientific knowledge directly, but we can move gradually closer towards it: "Popper was a realist who believed the aim of science was to find truth or increasingly truth-like theories" (Rawbottom: 2011 p124). The question that might arise at this point is that, since empirical knowledge is practically inaccessible to us, what could the possible benefits of having access to empirical knowledge be? For Popper, scientific knowledge is an useful instrument, but simply an instrument (*After Open Society*: p5). On the one hand, he appears as a pragmatist, in the sense that growth in knowledge is a positive thing, which at least serves the cause of technological innovation, even if we are to attain knowledge through methods which are never absolutely reliable.

On the other hand, Popper rejects this approach in principle, as scientific methods which are unchallenged must not be pursued. In both environments where knowledge is possible, that of the empirical world and also that of an *a priori* world, one must always question a claim of epistemic certainty (*critical rationalism*). This does not necessarily mean that knowledge is impossible – whether that be in an ontological sense (that there is nothing to know) or epistemologically (that even if there were something to be known, we could not possibly have access to it). Popper focuses on the epistemological sense and does not take a pessimistic approach; instead he believes that we can have access to that which is knowable, but, before proceeding to the evaluation of facts, he thinks Socrates's claim that "I know that I know

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<sup>3</sup> The open society of Popper is a society which rejects the possibility that social phenomena is brought about by obeying social or historical laws. The open society is interpreted by Popper as free from tyranny, tribalist mentality of seeking to belong only to one group and seeing those who do not as 'others'. Popper also uses the term 'tribalism' to refer to a society reluctant to challenge the common beliefs.

nothing” must be taken into account. Popper thinks that empirical tests that try to access that which is knowable must endeavour to prove our claims wrong, irrespective of whether these are claims about water boiling at 100 °C or about democracy as the most suitable type of governance available.

For Popper, empirical knowledge remains mysterious without further grounding and even the usual methods which try to solve the mysteries of empirical knowledge and ground it (in this case, the scientific method at that time) remain confusing and unreliable. Popper regarded science as devoid of any helpful legacy coming from some form of proto-science, and also as devoid of any strong backing from other sources. Consequently, “knowledge never starts from firm foundations but from uncertain starting points’ (O’Hear 2001: p12).

Though scientific knowledge is constantly growing on its own and does not draw from any epistemological methodology that precedes science such as metaphysics<sup>4</sup>, for Popper, sciences’ own method should suffice in growing empirical knowledge. Popper does not regard it as problematic that no type of proto-science (metaphysics) has been able to leave a constructive legacy in science, as the two are not compatible with one another. Nevertheless, Popper feels optimistic for the reasons that scientific knowledge is constantly growing and this has an impact on the growth of empirical knowledge in general. ‘Growth of scientific knowledge is growth of knowledge’ (O’Hear: 2001 p1).

The growth of empirical knowledge is a promising fact for Popper, as this allows us to move a step closer to empirical truth than before. However, he sees issues with the methods that make the growth of empirical knowledge possible. Central to his philosophy of science is the critical approach that tries to challenge the way science is seen to progress. One way to understand Popper is to declare that, in his philosophy of science, he does not present any alternative method for attaining knowledge than the scientific method, but instead he critically evaluates how we understand knowledge to grow. If we are to look in more detail at his account by focusing on his book *The Two Fundamental Problems in the Theory of Knowledge* (1933) Popper presents here two problems: the problem of induction and the problem of demarcation. For him, the former outlines the problem with experience and hypothesis and the latter, the problem with experience and metaphysics.

In this case Popper set out the standards for seeking empirical knowledge which namely that, empirical statements must be falsifiable or testable and that in contrast, metaphysical statements are not able to inform us about the world. The most Popper is able to do at this point is to reject metaphysical claims as being able to offer any empirical knowledge. As we will see below, Popper does not reject metaphysics but demarcates between them and scientific statements. Nietzsche too critically evaluates and with some demarcation, metaphysical claims, which are at the helm of the development of the latter’s philosophy.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Metaphysics’ can mean several distinct things. It can refer to an entity which exists outside the mind but which is not bound by the laws of physics and is thus supra-physical or metaphysical; on the other hand, ‘metaphysics’ could refer to something which is neither empirically observable nor defined by a priori principles.

## Critique of Metaphysics: A Revelation

Nietzsche has been since the nineteenth century amongst the most misunderstood and also the most futuristic of the philosophers<sup>5</sup>. He would have never liked the label of a ‘traditional philosopher’<sup>6</sup>, instead with his famous thematic ideas such as the will to power, ‘slave and master morality’, resentment, the eternal recurrence, the concept of the *Übermensch* and many more, Nietzsche seeks alternatives for making philosophy more applicable to the common reader’s life than the historical tradition of philosophy would allow. For him the academic tradition of science and philosophy lies exclusively in the hands of the scholars involved in what Nietzsche calls *wissenschaft*. Such an attitude to philosophy for Nietzsche lacks attention to the common individual and as a result it does not relate to them but instead draws its focus on matters relating to the external world<sup>7</sup>. *Wissenschaft* does not focus on the perceptions of the individual but instead it seeks to approach philosophy from an objective view point.

Nietzsche was poised to reject *wissenschaft* as his philosophy is devoted to the rejection of what he calls ‘the real world’<sup>8</sup> because for him all the conclusions which can be drawn by looking at the external world or life in general are personal perceptions (Clark: 1990 p3). Nietzsche instead claims to be a ‘perspectivist’ and tries to present the world to the reader as composed of phenomena which can only be understood subjectively in the eyes of the individual instead of assuming that human perception is in direct relationship with absolute truths. It would appear that Nietzsche has been influenced by Immanuel Kant’s *transcendental idealism* to imply that perceptions are brought about by our own viewpoints. Nietzsche however, does not reject the possibility of truth, and this brings about a two-fold problem which must be disclosed. For Nietzsche, there is clash between perspectivism and objectivism where the latter is rejected only in relation to metaphysical claims but not scientific claims. There is also a clash between epistemological and ontological notions of truth as judged objectively. The former relates to truth as empirical knowledge and the latter relates to possible facts which cannot be empirically testable, such as the moral facts. Nietzsche does not reject the possibility of truth as empirical knowledge, for example: it is raining. He rejects metaphysical statements as facts, but like Popper, Nietzsche demarcates between empirical knowledge and perspectivist claims.

Nietzsche philosophy is already developing from putting forward his own criticism and by so doing his philosophy tries to rule out any assertions from metaphysical or transcendental topics in favour of his *perspectivism*. To take the example of one of the most fundamental of questions in philosophy. The questions that surround Kant’s *transcendental idealism* are: Can we have knowledge of the external world and observe it as it is in and of itself? Or is there a world of appearances which is the only one accessible to us? Such questions have drawn enough attention to Nietzsche in particular the issues concerning Kantian philosophy such as the

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<sup>5</sup> By futuristic I do not imply a thinker who only rose to prominence posthumously but whose philosophy is somewhat capable of making elaborate claims about the future

<sup>6</sup> A traditional philosopher is a thinker whose works actively engage with the history of philosophy and its pre-established schools of thought. Philosophers traditionally put forward, take forward and contest pre-existing arguments within a particular school of thought or historical period of philosophy

<sup>7</sup> The external world relates to the world outside of the individual. Thinkers like Descartes include the human body into the external world but in this thesis the external world refers to anywhere other than the individual. It is important to also note that the external world is also empirical.

<sup>8</sup> The real world for Nietzsche means a universe where entities such as divine creation, moral facts and ultimately true statement exist in the form of absolute truths

existence of the noumenal world (the world as it is in-itself) which Nietzsche rejects as objective truth. In the early works such as *On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense* (1873) Nietzsche saw truth as an illusion brought about by the human construct of language which is metaphoric and the individual forgets that it is so. Concepts are constructed as a result by assuming that these are permanent fixtures. (Magnus & Higgins: 1999 p29). Nietzsche concludes that metaphysical statements are mere perspectives.

However, Nietzsche finds perspectives potentially problematic. In his philosophy, he initiates an adverse response to what he perceives as polemical which also lies in the polemic's own genealogy. Christianity is a crucial point to evaluate as Nietzsche persistently in his works directs his criticism to the Judaeo-Christian tradition and more particularly the Christian ethics and theology. His philosophical foundations which stem from polemics he identifies allow the Nietzschean reader to grasp how he develops his philosophy from his critique of the polemics including those which derive from the Christian ethics. It would be incomplete to try to define Nietzsche starting point in his philosophy without unravelling his own personal beliefs and relation to Christianity. It is also important to note the changes of Nietzsche's stance in his philosophy as a coming-of-age process starting precisely with his own faith.

Young Nietzsche was the son of a Lutheran pastor and familiar with the Christian faith. It was later on in life that Nietzsche became agnostic and eventually a non-believer. Furthermore, he became associated to and even inspired by atheist personalities including Richard Wagner<sup>9</sup> and Arthur Schopenhauer. Though young Nietzsche was inspired by the likes of Schopenhauer and Wagner, his later works became cynical. He gradually refined his views by leaning more to his personal intellectual development rather than his faith and those who had previously inspired him. Nietzsche believed religion relied on what Schopenhauer called a 'metaphysical need' which transcends the empirical world as a desire to connect with the world<sup>10</sup> and thus to become immensely involved with it (Magnus & Higgins: 2003 p98). Nevertheless, Schopenhauer had no problem understanding such religious appeal as he found the quest for the metaphysical need present in Eastern thought and religion from which he was also influenced. Nietzsche also found religion coherent with Schopenhauer's philosophy of the world as *will*. Schopenhauer identifies a cosmic will as a responsible force for the maintenance and dynamics of existence. He denies existence of anything in the absolute except the *will*.

Schopenhauer adopted the Kantian *transcendental idealism* and located the notion of *will* in the noumenal world and the knowable world in the phenomenal world (the world of appearance). Schopenhauer's Kantian notions of *noumena* and *phenomena* illustrated as *will* and representation respectively have had an influence on Nietzsche's *will to power*, *eternal recurrence* and more specifically on the way Nietzsche characterises the Dionysian and Apollonian gods (respectively) in Greek tragedy found in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). Nietzsche eventually rejected Schopenhauer and his metaphysical philosophy.

The recognition of the phenomenal world and as the only world possible compels Nietzsche to relativism, nihilism, and the 'revaluation of all values' where possibilities lie in the creativity of the individual rather than the individual's possible discoveries of objective values. Nietzsche

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Wagner, in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) was portrayed by Nietzsche as a potential redeemer to the German culture, but who subsequently was attacked in two of Nietzsche's works: *The Case of Wagner* (1888) and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1888).

<sup>10</sup> The world here refers to observable existence

rejects the ‘world-in-itself’ on the grounds of being metaphysical as well as inaccessible and thus insignificant to humankind. *Perspectivism* instead tries to justify that a demarcation between *noumena* and *phenomena* should not have taken place at all. Alternatively, the question of truth, whether or not there is such thing as *noumena*, as well as trying to possibly find an alternative to interpreting key claims about the universe as *perspectivist* which as a result brings into question the whereabouts of truth value in discussing *noumena* and the *will* as a cosmic *noumena*. In other words, is it possible to reduce the notion of the *will* and that of the ‘thing-in-itself’ to a perspective which dwells within the social world? If so, is Nietzsche reducing Schopenhauer’s will and Kant’s *noumena* to the two philosopher’s own perspectives? It would seem so, but conditionally for as long as we admit Nietzsche’s assertions on knowledge also derive from his own perspective and personal grounds.

### **A Contrast of the Two Metaphysics**

So far we have outlined the foundations of the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper. What we have been able to understand is that both of their works originate from their criticism. Such criticism is grounded in the way in which we begin to candidly seek knowledge. But also how we categorise the methodologies for knowledge. At this point the main correlation between Nietzsche and Popper lies in their criticism of the assessment of metaphysics. For Popper metaphysics does not contribute to science at all. In terms of the history of ideas and discoveries, scientists do not take forward metaphysical claims in order to support them scientifically and also to use metaphysical claims as a navigation for what we should seek to know. Therefore, metaphysics does not in any way support science. For Popper metaphysical claims are also untestable and thus unscientific. Nietzsche would agree with Popper in a number of ways. For both philosophers metaphysical claims make no claims to objective and empirical knowledge. Metaphysical claims are deceptive – we will later see how some metaphysical claims have been deemed by the two philosophers as potentially harmful to the individual. However, Nietzsche and Popper differ in how they re-categorise metaphysical claims. For Popper, metaphysical claims have no place in science but he does not advocate that they be fully rejected but only rejected as scientific statements. For Nietzsche on the other hand, metaphysics must be rejected because they purport to the real world which he rejects. This is because, for Nietzsche metaphysical statements pretend to have a truth content which must be rejected altogether.

This re-categorisation identifies the possibility of a difference in the notion of metaphysics between the two philosophers. Metaphysics relates to different aspects in Nietzsche to that of Popper. For Nietzsche metaphysics makes both supra-natural claim such as the existence of God or moral facts and also metaphysics for Nietzsche is a grand narrative which seeks to explain the purpose of the universe. As seen particularly in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche may permit the essence of his understanding of metaphysics as an artistic form but which must comply with his notion of *perspectivism*. Whereas for Popper, metaphysics is merely a non-falsifiable and thus non-testable claims to knowledge. What we can see at this stage of the discussion of the place of metaphysics in both philosophers, is some form of demarcation in both thinkers, as a revaluation of the role of metaphysics. Both Nietzsche and Popper dislocate metaphysics from its objective position by giving it a subjective one.

Now that we have identified Nietzsche and Popper's different stance on metaphysics as groundwork for their philosophies we can present their philosophical processes as a departure from what they seek to criticise. The next section will continue to make a parallel presentation of the main part of their philosophies. I am going to elaborate how Popper develops his philosophy of science which in turn is a pre-requisite of his political philosophy and its *piecemeal social engineering*. Likewise, how Nietzsche's aphoristic philosophy consolidates into an existentialist social engineering process.

## Chapter 4: Nietzsche and Popper's Antecedent Philosophical Process

Following Nietzsche and Popper's separate critique of metaphysics, the next chapter presents the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper presented as an antecedent process for the development of their philosophies. This chapter endeavours to categorise the various aphorism and *themes* in Nietzsche's literature with a view to investigate whether or not Nietzsche has a consolidated philosophy. Likewise, I am going to presents Popper's two problems concerning scientific knowledge: the problem of demarcation and the problems of induction. It will become apparent how Popper addresses the *two problems* to explain how according to him, scientific knowledge grows. Once we are able to see Popper's methodology for the growth of scientific knowledge, we will be able to have a clear view of his philosophy of science. Though the two philosophers focus on different areas of philosophy, their share substantial similarities in the development of their philosophies, with their separate critique of metaphysics as a stepping stone.

### Popper's Growth of Scientific Knowledge

Throughout his works, Popper revisits his grand narrative that one can never be sufficiently certain about our claims to knowledge and that any such claim must be evaluated critically to see if it can survive falsification. Popper calls his position here *critical rationalism*. He thinks the assumptions we make when we formulate claims based on empirical observations must be questioned in order to evaluate their reliability. In the second volume of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), Popper contrasts *critical rationalism* and *comprehensive rationalism*. According to comprehensive or uncritical rationalism, any assumption which cannot be supported either by argument or experience must be rejected. Yet, this very thesis of uncritical rationalism cannot be supported by experience or by a further argument. Hence, as noted by Darrell P. Rowbottom, Popper realises that *comprehensive rationalism* cannot be applied to itself, because the same rule (the thesis of comprehensive rationalism) paradoxically discards itself. As a result, *comprehensive rationalism* appears dogmatic for Popper (Rowbottom: 2011 p2). According to Popper, a genuine scientist must not aim to justify every assumption, but to eliminate as many incorrect assumptions as possible. Hence, the limits which demarcate the realm of claims which are genuinely scientific will not be given by an account of justification, but by an account of falsification. This account will place a very significant weight on empirical observations.

### The Problem of Demarcation

Science may have a distinctive method by the significance it accords to empirical observation when compared to other institutions which make claims to knowledge, such as metaphysics and arithmetic. The distinctive methods of other theories of knowledge may vary depending on the object of enquiry, cultural and historical contexts, and even language and the location of

their enquirers. Popper's question concerns the distinction between scientific and non-scientific claims, particularly metaphysical ones. Such a demarcation may seem challenging for a number of reasons: For instance, referring back to the discussion of *comprehensive rationalism*, we can wonder whether science rejects any aspect of rationalism. Also, and perhaps more generally, we can wonder whether science constitutes a domain of inquiry which is sufficiently distinctive compared to other such domains?

Popper is quite aware of the position of science within the genealogy of theories of knowledge; in his own words, '[m]ost of the empirical sciences have sprung from the womb of metaphysics. Their pre-scientific form was speculatively philosophical' (*The Two Problems*: p4). It could be the case that science may be constituted by heuristic processes, which are sufficiently strong to be able to establish it as a domain of inquiry independent from, for instance, metaphysics; but it may also run the risk of being simply part of a broader domain, where metaphysics and science are only two mutually dependent components.

Since metaphysics predates science and yet it co-exists with science, science runs the risk of being dependent on, if not remaining absorbed by, metaphysics or by the sum of all domains of knowledge, with science and metaphysics representing only imperfectly distinguishable components thereof. Sir James George Frazer, seen by many as the father of modern anthropology, maintains in his voluminous book *The Golden Bough* (1890) that humankind progressed from magic to religion, and, then, to science. Such an observation by Frazer at first holds science captive to the three stages of the development of human knowledge and understanding of the external world. The three stages have common objectives, such as the desire to overcome pain and the will to know about the external world. An attempt, like Popper's, to distinguish between scientific and non-scientific claims would have to put forward distinctive characteristics found exclusively in science.

It is not difficult to find reasons for Popper's interest in the problem of demarcation. Given the huge pragmatic and epistemic successes of sciences, any endeavour which claims to be scientific without being genuinely scientific would benefit illegitimately from the reputation of scientific investigations. Truth claims, which can be traced back to scientific method are usually trusted and applied. It is even more important, therefore, to be capable of identifying pseudo-scientific claims. As noted by Anthony O'Hear, Popper needs to solve the problem demarcation in order to define what is peculiar about science and its growth (O'Hear: 2001 p1). Popper sets out the 'criterion of demarcation' as follows:

The criterion of falsifiability may serve as criterion of demarcation. Only statements which can be refuted by empirical reality tell us something about such reality... fully decidable and exclusively falsifiable statements are declared to be empirically scientific, while other statements including mathematical statements are demarcated from empirical-scientific statements as metaphysical statements'.  
(*The Two Problems*: p10)

In other words, Popper believes that the theory of knowledge must establish a strict and universally applicable criterion that allows us to distinguish between empirical sciences and metaphysical assertions' (*The Two Problems*: p4). The criterion is that a scientific statement



must be falsifiable and that if it is not be falsifiable, then it is not scientific<sup>11</sup>. For Popper, science would only allow any access to knowledge to derive empirically (but in a very specific sense, that is, not through induction and generalization), and a claim to knowledge which does not originate empirically must therefore belong to the realm of metaphysics. As mentioned in Popper and Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics above, Popper does not render metaphysics insignificant, but, as long as science strictly retains its *criterion of demarcation*, it must distance itself from metaphysical assumptions and even mathematical claims.

Popper does not try to 'purify' science from metaphysics he simply allows for the latter to maintain its credibility but within its own realm. He opposes the logical positivist's view that non-scientific matters are worthless and overtly stands against the likes of Rudolph Carnap, whose own demarcation criterion separates sense (for science) from nonsense (for metaphysics). In Popper's words,

[t]he attempts made by Rudolph Carnap to show that the demarcation between science and metaphysics coincides with that of sense and nonsense have failed. The reason is that the positivistic concept of 'meaning' or 'sense' is inappropriate for achieving this demarcation – simply because metaphysics need not be meaningless even though it is not science (*C & R*: p341).

Popper agrees that metaphysics is not a science (and neither is mathematics) and that only science can attempt to make any claims about empirical *phenomena* in the external world (namely, hypotheses which can be falsified through experience). But this does not mean that metaphysics is meaningless. Popper uses Einstein's demarcation between applied mathematics and pure mathematics. Einstein maintains that '[i]n so far as statements of mathematics speak about reality, they are not certain, and in so far as they are certain, they do not speak of the reality.' (*The Two Problems*: p10) Popper points out that, according to his account, we only need replacing: "not certain" with "falsifiable" or "refutable" (*The Two Problems*: p10).

Popper retains his praise for Einstein for allowing theories, such as the theory of general relativity, to be open to falsification and, thus, for him, the theory of *general relativity* is scientific. On the contrary, he is critical of astronomers who rule out any testability of their theories by formulating them in a way which is un-falsifiable (*C and R*: p48). Furthermore, Popper does not hesitate to point out that those who are reluctant to formulate theories that are subject to falsification, most notably the psychoanalysts and Marxists avoid testability in order to retain their theories as irrefutable. Popper has a problem with psychoanalysts and Marxists in the same way in which he has with artists and mathematicians. The reason is that all of these seem to put forward empirically relevant hypotheses, for which sometimes they even claim a scientific character, and, yet, their hypotheses are not falsifiable.

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<sup>11</sup> This does not imply that a hypothesis for as long as it is not falsified it must remain non-scientific but instead a hypothesis, in order to be falsifiable must relate to empirical premises. In a sense it is only the event of falsification which establishes however subtle, a relationship between the observer and the object. To some extent the object is able to "communicate" with the observer only through in the event falsification. Probability, however high, fails to submerge into such a profound correspondence between the observer and the observed. It is precisely through the depth of this correspondence, that Popper sees the possibility of the growth of empirical knowledge.

We have seen that, according to Popper, scientific hypotheses are falsifiable – they are empirically relevant insofar as they can be falsified by experience. The process of acquiring knowledge is in fact, for Popper, a process of formulating hypothesis and attempting to falsify them. Why does Popper feel that, the traditional account of scientific knowledge as formulation of hypothesis through experience, induction and generalization may not be sufficient in explaining how scientific knowledge grows? The answer is given the second problem discussed by Popper, the problem of induction, to which I turn next.

## **The Problem of Induction**

When making empirical observations, such observations may be regarded as serving the purpose of leading to generalisations and new knowledge. We can rarely empirically observe everything in order to arrive at a conclusion and to be able to verify such a conclusion. For instance, we cannot observe all instances of movement under the influence of the force of gravitation. Instead we are inclined to generalize over what we have already observed and we use the samples already provided in order to formulate concepts about our empirical observations in the form of hypotheses. The problem that arises when formulating our hypotheses is that we feel psychologically persuaded to accept such hypotheses as laws only because we feel convinced that, as long as an empirical experiment has produced similar results, the hypothesis has empirical support.

Anthony O’Hear points out that there are two Popperian doctrines of induction in his *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1934) given by the logical primacy of repetition and temporal primacy of repetition (O’Hear: 2001 p10). The former holds that repeated instances furnish a type of justification for a hypothesis to become a universal law and the latter that even if repeated instances fail to invite any justification for a universal law, they induce expectations and beliefs (O’Hear: 2001 p10).

The danger Popper identifies is that any given sample of empirical observations, as long as it is not the sum of all possible observations, allows room for unobserved entities to differ. The nature of hypotheses is such that it does not relate to all possible empirical observations but only to a given sample. A classic example would be to observe white swans over a number of times and to begin to believe that all swans must be white as only white swans have been identified. This is what Popper calls ‘the problem of induction’<sup>12</sup>. The problem consists in the fact that induction cannot justify the hypothesis formulated as a law, since it starts from a few instances where the hypothesis applies, but generalizes over all instances, and this move is illegitimate.

The notion of induction is paired with its logical counterpart, that of ‘deduction’. Popper sets out to distinguish between the two terms. The former applies to generalizations, whereas the latter to logical conclusions. It is necessary to point to the location of the inductive method within the scientific method. For Popper, ‘[t]heories of knowledge may either have a deductionist or inductionist orientation depending on how they assess the significance of

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<sup>12</sup> Popper does not focus on other problems of knowledge which rationalist philosophers (such as Rene Descartes) have pointed - relating to empirical observation being unreliable as perception can be deceptive. Neither is Popper concerned with logical and linguistic issues relating to how to define or categorise an entity. This does not mean to say Popper only seen the inductive method as problematic.

deduction (logical derivation) and of induction (generalization)' (*The Two Problems*: p8). According to Popper, the early development of a particular scientific theory will involve empirical observation for the formulation of hypotheses, but it will then make use of logical deduction. For Popper, scientific methodology should be deductionist: 'All scientific methods of justification are without exception based on strictly logical deductions [...] there is no induction of any sort qua scientific method' (*The Two Problems*: p8).

The logical deductions which are used to test a hypothesis cannot verify an empirical statement. In particular, the hypothetical empirical statement of a scientific theory (e.g., all objects fall attracted by gravitation or all swans are white); hypotheses can only be falsified and never verified. Popper concludes that

[t]he question of validity of universal empirical statements may be tentatively answered by suggesting that universal empirical statements are not verifiable but only falsifiable. In other words [...] universal empirical statements can never be assigned a positive degree of validity, but may well be assigned a negative one (*The Two Problems*: p10).

It is important to emphasize that Popper is in no way rejecting the possibility of verifying every basic empirical statement. The statement that the swans I observed on the river yesterday were all white can be verified, as it is not hypothetical, but assertoric, and refers to a set of possible observations, which can be carried out and are sufficient for empirical verification. Of course, this does not solve all the other possible issues that may arise, such as whether or not I can trust my senses or what exactly a swan is. On the other hand, the hypothesis which by virtue of being hypothetical cannot be verified; they refer to a potentially infinite set of observations, which leave open the possibility that the hypothesis will turn out to be false. Whereas such hypotheses cannot be verified, they nevertheless can be falsified. For instance, from the hypothesis that all swans are white, we can deduce the claim that swans in Scandinavia are also white. When we find a black swan in Scandinavia, the particular statement concerning swans in other parts of Northern Europe is falsified and so is the more general statement concerning all the swans.

According to Popper, if a hypothesis is not falsified (say, we find no non-white swan in Scandinavia), then it becomes 'corroborated'. To be sure, corroborated theories may turn out to be false, if they are eventually falsified. Irrespective of whether a theory is true or false, it may come closer to truth than other theories depending on whether it has more or less truth content. Being closer to truth in this sense indicates a theory's *verisimilitude*. Hence, two false theories or claims may be distinct in their *verisimilitude*, just as two true theories or claims may be. (*C and R* p 223)

It would seem to many that science attains empirical knowledge through the inductive method and more and more similar results increase the probability of a hypothesis being valid. Indeed, the degree of *verisimilitude* of a theory gives that theory some credibility. However, for Popper, empirical knowledge grows through the process of falsification, rather than that of inductive verification. Popper rejects the claims made by logical positivism which that the growth in empirical knowledge is proportional to the growth in empirical observations. What the process of falsification does is to determine (gradually) a theory's degree of closeness to truth and, hence, their *verisimilitude*.

Now theories differ depending on how falsifiable they are. The less prone to falsification a

theory is, the more generalized and, thus, more distant it is from the empirical knowledge. Likewise, the more prone to falsification a theory is, the more detailed it is and thus closer to empirical knowledge. For example, if the hypothesis that water boils at 100 degrees Celsius under any conditions survives falsification, then we cannot learn anything about the conditions which are needed in order for water to boil at 100 degrees C. We have in this case a general statement, which is distant from empirical knowledge. If under specific conditions, however, the hypothesis fails, and water does not boil at 100° C, then we have the opportunity to learn about the factors which determine water to reach its boiling point. We could for instance compare the results taken from bringing water to boiling point in the Himalayas with the results obtained in the low lands of the Netherlands. . We would learn that air pressure also determines the temperature at which water reaches its boiling point. We would also be able to find out other possible factors that determine the boiling water, such as oxygen content. For Popper, this is how empirical knowledge grows.

A statement like “Water boils at 100° C’ has a poorer empirical content than the statement “Water boils at 100° C, if pressure is higher than a particular value’. Moreover, for the latter statement, we have more indication of how we can falsify it, than we have for the former statement. In the case of the latter, we can test both temperature and pressure.

So far, we have seen that Popper has offered a new insight into the philosophy of science with an approach of an unorthodox nature, which specifically points out that the scientific method for growth in empirical knowledge functions through falsification, rather than verification and that corroborated hypotheses are sufficient for attaining empirical knowledge. According to Popper, we should value corroborated hypotheses, since corroboration moves a hypothesis closer to truth. Moreover, it is better to have a hypothesis, which is corroborated until falsified, than to have no hypothesis at all. It is for these reasons that he regards theory as having scientific character only when it can be falsifiable. For Popper science should remain an open-ended quest for knowledge of an empirical kind and should avoid the tendency of formulating metaphysical statements, ‘grand narratives’ and even ‘paradigm shifts’. For many years, this view in philosophy of science has been dominant and has been considered by many (perhaps paradoxically) as the final word on the matter. For instance, Sir Hermann Bondi, claims: ‘There is no more to science than its method, and there is no more to its method than Popper has said’ (Magee 1978: p9). In what follows, we will consider this brief outline of Popper’s philosophy of science as the background against which the comparison with Nietzsche will be undertaken. It is for this reason that the various objections and criticisms of Popper’s position will not be considered here<sup>13</sup>.

Popper’s applies the same assertion in his political philosophy as in his philosophy of science in which case, social scientific knowledge grows similarly to the former. In contrast to Nietzsche who might side with Popper on the necessary processes of the growth of our pursuits, which for Nietzsche are neither empirical knowledge nor political freedom the growth of the individual’s values.

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Kuhn, in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), maintains that scientific knowledge progresses not in a gradual way as Popper outlines, but through a process of ‘paradigm shifts’. Scientific evolution would only change a perspective into a different paradigm, if a sufficient accumulation of observations contradicting the prevailing theories and practices of the time is produced, and alternative theories and practices start to emerge as part of a new paradigm.

## Nietzsche's Philosophical Reform

Nietzsche's critique of the philosophical tradition also spans into the tradition's philosophical enquiries. He is discontent with the kind of questions that have been raised for millennia whether that be the pre-Socratic philosophers or even Zarathustra<sup>14</sup>. On other occasions, he does not seek to expand or modify the list of problems philosophers need to address instead he suggests such problems need to be dealt with in new ways (Magnus & Higgins: 1999 p155). The manner in which Nietzsche pursues new ways of dealing with the philosophical problems goes beyond the methods of merely solving the problems by argument and their categorisation in linguistic and logical terms (Magnus & Higgins: 1999 p156). As mentioned above Nietzsche rejects the tradition of *wissenschaft* and instead follows his own methodology which will be elaborated below, mainly through his existentialist philosophy.

Nietzsche likes to diminish the tradition as *status quo* rather than enriching it with his own contribution to such a tradition which may lie in favour of the status quo. His style of philosophising as being counterproductive to the tradition at first sight, becomes emotional with an outburst of adversity instead of maintaining a philosophical style of a philosopher who in cold blood judges the validity of an argument. 'Nietzsche does not formulate philosophy by writing his thoughts and articulating his ideas, he virtually shouts at us' (Solomon: 2003 p23). Richard Schacht points out at the difference between Nietzsche's method and that of the rationalist tradition. In Schacht's words:

For the most part, Nietzsche resembles less a mathematician attempting to prove a theorem, or a scientist attempting to substantiate a theory, than (a rather fiery) courtroom lawyer attempting to persuade a jury, or an unruly Socrates challenging the convictions of a miscellany of interlocutors (Schacht: 1992 p2).

In this way Nietzsche appeals to emotions of those readers who may find his philosophy applicable to everyday life instead of those who believe the study of philosophy belongs only to academia as noted above with *wissenschaft*. His method for philosophising may manifest itself as a "heresy" confronting the already established "orthodoxy" the latter of which belonging to the philosophical tradition. 'Nietzsche does not hesitate to confront the reader with suggestions involving radical modifications of commonly accepted ways of thinking' (Schacht: 1992 p2). By so doing Nietzsche is (whether intentionally or not) unwittingly liberating the philosophical tradition not only by revising it but also by inviting those from the outside of the tradition to read philosophy through his own.

His style of philosophising though not amateurish, reveals itself to the reader as a 'starter kit' for which the reader can apply by themselves and to their own life. In a way Nietzsche gives the philosophical tradition an exoteric appeal. In this case philosophy becomes less dependent on its tradition and more involved with issues which have not yet drawn the attention of the philosophical tradition's agenda. To be more specific, the politics of identity makes a good case for a new philosophical agenda. An opportunity for an existentialist social engineering could be seized. This is because Nietzsche's focus on the life of the individual and her place in the world makes his philosophy existentialist by nature.

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<sup>14</sup> Zarathustra according to Nietzsche was the first prophet to have mentioned ideas about good and evil. Nietzsche reintroduces Zarathustra in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with a view to re-consider the polarization of moral judgements as either good or evil.

The way for Nietzsche to flee from the philosophical tradition, is to draw his attention in retrospect to the possible genealogies of ideas such as the real world and beliefs in moral facts. It is important to bring to light the causes of Nietzsche's motivation for his critical philosophy and at the same time to explain why he decides to take one giant leap away from the traditional history of philosophy, the society of his time and its moral doctrines. There must be a connection between the *status quo* in philosophy and society and a set of problems he identifies with the above, where such problems or polemics encourage Nietzsche for a philosophy of his own. But Nietzsche does to some extent retain his involvement with the tradition. In Robert C. Solomon's own words:

Nietzsche is interested in some traditional issues that have challenged philosophers since ancient times. The nature of ethics, morality and religion, the genesis and structure of society, the locus of the self and its alleged freedom and rationality... (Solomon: 2003 p22).

Such issues too have challenged Nietzsche and would be fair to say that, without the still standing issues the philosophers have faced hitherto his time, Nietzsche cannot form the basis from which his philosophy can reflect on.

Nietzsche's attack on traditional philosophy may have backfired as by attacking the tradition Nietzsche departs from which have cost him his status as a "conventional philosopher"<sup>15</sup> The discussion as to whether or not Nietzsche was a philosopher at all still persists today. Those who are reluctant to accept him as such would justify their conclusion by claiming that Nietzsche was not part of the philosophical tradition and at the same time was not involved in any traditional philosophical school of thought where he could have made a substantial contribution to the history of philosophy of that particular period. To take as an example, Nietzsche's uninterrupted attention to morality and religion. Had he been a traditional philosopher his contribution would have lied in the philosophy of religion and ethics where he would have participated in a school of thought within the corresponding philosophical disciplines. Instead Nietzsche has been viewed as an 'anti-philosopher'. 'Nietzsche is often accused of being destructive... of criticising and not affirming' (Solomon: 2003 p22).

Nietzsche's philosophical disruption to explicitly call for a revaluation of all values as the means of the reformation of values and ways of re-asserting questions about life. Such reviews, inevitably lead to the setting of a new philosophical standard that might not necessarily become a new foundation for philosophy but which could achieve a legacy. Such Nietzschean legacy for instance, has been regarded by many commentators as some of the foundations of postmodern thought. It may not be possible in this thesis to define the extent to which the so called postmodern philosophy is Nietzschean. Neither would it be accurate to conclude that continental philosophy from Nietzsche onwards is concerned entirely with Nietzsche's legacy, however seminal his works may be.

His scholarly legacy however does show a strong affinity and substantial contribution to the history of philosophy particularly in the twentieth century continental philosophy such as existentialist and postmodernist schools of thought and thus a stronger affinity with his successors than with his predecessors. In R. Kevin Hill's own words:

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<sup>15</sup> A philosopher who becomes part of the history of Western philosophy by their association to a pre-existing school of thought within that philosophical tradition.

Nietzsche's interpretation has become a central enterprise in making sense of the often referred to but little understood phenomenon of postmodernism. . . There is a widespread belief that we have entered a phase, not only in the history of philosophy, but in many cultural spheres, which leaves the characteristic commitments, values, and dilemmas of modernity behind (Hill: 2003 p1).

In a contemporary context Nietzsche would be viewed as a social progressivist in a sense he persistently attempts to part from the past course of history which have shaped the society until his time. The extent to which we can deem Nietzsche postmodernist enables Nietzsche to be drawn closer to the politics of identity. By looking at Nietzsche's place within the philosophical tradition, we see that just as liberation groups seek move away from *mono-tribalist normativism*, Nietzsche appears to do the same.

### **Aphorisms and Polemics**

Nietzsche's style of writing is aphoristic which often re-appear in different books of his. It would be evident to the reader since the publication of *Human-All-Too-Human* (1878) that Nietzsche's work became aphoristic in style. These aphorisms vary in length, while some exceed some pages - others are merely a short fragment of only a few sentences and which might not necessarily bear any relevance to its previous or the following passage. The passages converge under a subheading below the title intended to deconstruct its title into one sentence but the fragmentary and aphoristic style does not allow for such deduction despite the subheading (Solomon: 2003 p22). In hindsight, subheadings appear to reveal the main argument in the book, nevertheless many of Nietzsche's works concentrate on a variety of issues and paying a lot of attention to the subheadings might prove misleading.

Should Nietzsche's philosophy have a focal point around which his aphorisms can be allocated? If so, his philosophy will start to look less fragmental and more consolidated than the structure of his works appears to permit. One way of binding his fragments together is to identify certain *themes*<sup>16</sup> in his philosophy. For instance, Nietzsche's spectrum of human actions as life-negating and life-affirming purport to a philosophy which is grounded in the Nietzschean thought. Similarly, other themes deriving from what Nietzsche deems polemical might embody a continuum between polemics and their antidote. The challenge rests in the ability to consolidate the relevant themes of Nietzsche into a robust philosophy with an obvious philosophical development,

Nietzsche's polemical aphorisms appear to share similarities in substance rather than content, that is: in the form of an allegation against the *status quo* i.e. the role of Christian ethics of his time or the rejection of a pre-existing school of thought. This leads Nietzsche to treat his points of concern as polemical. Some of the polemics Nietzsche presents as solvable in a two-fold form: One the one hand, Nietzsche identifies polemic as a brute fact of the natural world and caused independently of the human agency. In which case, Nietzsche calls for affirmation of such polemics by accepting their presence in the life of the individual whether or not the individual feels inclined to do so (for instance the human ambitions as the will to power and

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<sup>16</sup> Such themes are often revisited in his works and which as a result have acquired fame for Nietzsche, such as: the will to power, eternal recurrence, slave morality, the concept of the *Übermensch*, prophet Zarathustra, God is dead, etc.

the possibility of the eternal recurrence of the individual's life). On the other hand, there are polemics identified by Nietzsche which have been constructed by human agency and which must be eradicated such as *slave morality* and resentment (which will be outlined below).

Nietzsche's willingness to find solutions to his polemics inevitably forms a structure in his philosophy. We could see his philosophy as identifying polemics and seeking to find solutions such as ways of overcoming the polemics. Nietzsche's *themes* or cases often correspond to three groups: The critical group (polemics), the prescriptive group and the analytic group. The first dedicates itself to the polemics Nietzsche identifies with philosophy, religion and society such as: ascetic ideals, *ressentiment*, slave morality, the belief in the God of classical theism<sup>17</sup>, the individual who is 'all-too-human', the last man<sup>18</sup>. The second group prescribes the solutions as antithesis to the polemics often found in the critical group such as: Master morality, the 'free spirit', the *Übermensch*, and moral judgements which transcend categorisations of actions as good and evil. The third group describes what Nietzsche sees in the world and since these have not been categorised in the 'critical group' they must be *phenomena* which Nietzsche does not find blameworthy, but which must somehow be overcome, whether by eradication or by tolerance. These include namely: The eternal recurrence, the will to power and the perspectivist view of perceiving the external world as indifferent and without necessarily an aim.

It is worth mentioning at this point that Nietzsche does not seek for a solution for every of his polemics. This is partly because Nietzsche views some of his polemics with the outmost *perspectivism*. Some polemics are not always polemical, or that they are so only in relation to other polemics. There are two themes, namely, nihilism and the revaluation of values which can be categorised as: polemical, descriptive and prescriptive (solutions). The thesis is going to focus in detail on the tripartite nature of the two themes in order to devise a more comprehensive philosophy of Nietzsche than the fragments allow. If we are to see a relationship between polemics and their antithesis, as well as Nietzsche's characterisation of his polemics, we will be able to see a Nietzschean philosophical process and thus a solid Nietzschean philosophy.

## Nietzsche Contra Orthodoxy

Nietzsche was able to identify as polemical the legacy of modernism and its origins. Some of the problems Nietzsche highlights in Germany of his time and across Western Europe, concern social decadence and decline. He saw that social decadence permeated into the individual too. Nietzsche does not find one single agent responsible for the decadence neither does he show to reject modernism in its entirety, but he does insist in attributing some of culpability to the Judaeo-Christian tradition and its moral doctrines. Perhaps the cornerstone problem for Nietzsche is the Judaeo-Christian tradition, from which many polemics Nietzsche identifies in his works derive from. Particularly the belief in moral facts and the God of classical theism. For this reason, Nietzsche looks for polemics in retrospect.

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<sup>17</sup> This is the understanding of God initially derives from the monotheistic tradition of a god that is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, benevolent. The God of the classical theism is also the creator and sustainer of the universe

<sup>18</sup> These are two examples which Nietzsche uses to refer to individuals for whom he feels contempt and lack what Nietzsche desires to find in the individual such as the ability to overcome oneself but also self-mastery skills



Robert C. Solomon also holds that Nietzsche copies Hegel by believing that: ‘one only truly understands a phenomenon if one is to go to the genesis, one understands its origins and development and its overall place in the consciousness’ (Solomon: 2003 p23). Once such genealogy is identified, it can be scrutinised. For Nietzsche *ad hominem* arguments do precisely that. He is not only interested in rejecting what he finds polemical, but he is also interested in justifying why it was poised to be a polemic in the first place. It might be that the authority of many ideas and hypotheses is deliberately biased. Not only does he find a major problem with accepting the external world as the real world but he is even sceptical about the way in which the author asserts their ideas - namely through the author’s own biased perception. Nietzsche believes, the author’s personal motives have an influence on their judgement when finding a solution to a philosophical problem. He holds the same view on those who have shaped religion as well as society:

Nietzsche is not simply attempting to provide new answers to these old questions, nor is he trying to formulate the questions. He is rather trying to ascertain how such curious questions and the concepts that provide their subject matter could have risen (Solomon: 2003 p22).

For that very reason Nietzsche’s arguments take an *ad hominem* quality aimed at rejecting claims by trying to undermine its author’s credibility for such claims. He overtly puts forward *ad hominem* arguments when discussing morality and especially the role of *slave morality*<sup>19</sup>. As a result Nietzsche concludes that the root cause of a particular polemic such as *slave morality* lies in its genealogy<sup>20</sup>. If we are to look at its genealogy, we would be able to see how the polemic developed in the first place. The conclusion should be able to prompt the rejection of a particular doctrine as polemical. To be more precise the genealogy in question refers to the authorship of a particular doctrine. Nietzsche finds the genealogy of Christian ethics polemical.

For Nietzsche, the Christian ethics and its ascetic ideals must be rejected in a process which on the one hand eliminates a pre-existing ideal (or value) and on the other compensates with a new set of values worthy of its historical and geographic context. This process Nietzsche covertly refers to as the revaluation of values. R Kevin Hill maintains that Nietzsche was not the only thinker to grasp a necessity for change. Hegel too, ‘attempts to archive the history of philosophy to achieve a perfect representation of reality’. Even Marx lived at a point in history where philosophers can no longer do with interpreting the world but instead the aim was to change it (Hill: 2003 p2). Nietzsche was motivated by change too but unlike Hegel and Marx who believed that ideas regardless of how outdated or irrelevant to our time, hold some degree of significance as part of a particular revaluation process (dialectic historicism) in order for new ideas to be derived from; thus, a thesis though undesirable, had to exist in order to attract an antithesis with which to synthesise and restart the same procedure over again. For Nietzsche however, if the ‘genealogy’ of an ideal is flawed, the whole process is destined to accomplish flawed by-products and thus the only solution is to discredit the doctrine at its foundations. The next section investigates a Nietzschean case study from *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887)

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<sup>19</sup> This will be discussed in detail. Nietzsche differentiates *slave morality* from *master morality* in order to reject the traditional understanding of right and wrong

<sup>20</sup> Nietzsche in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887) investigates the genealogy of the Christian ethics to argue that Christian morality prevalent in the Western society of his time, originates from an inferiority complex which persuades the individual to embrace it by means of subordination,

where his critique of morality is implemented by the methodology of the *ad hominem* argument. The way in which Nietzsche presents his critique of morality, does not make it clear as to whether religion created morality or the other way around, despite the fact that Nietzsche's genealogical interpretation in *Genealogy* offers an explanation for the development of morality or *slave morality* more specifically as applicable to religion.

### **The Genealogy of the Negation of Life**

The exact notion of 'genealogy' in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) is not very clear, nevertheless a type of genealogy as an 'origin' in which case that of morality is clearly evident. Neither is the historical context in which *Genealogy* is set. It does not particularly refer to a geographical location, historical period or social and cultural group. Even the terms "master" and "slave" bear no connection (but only a resemblance) to any historical account of slavery. The genealogy of morality is one of the 'super' polemics for Nietzsche as for him the entire construction of moral sentiment not only is heavily biased but such biased assertion about the significance of morality has had a negative impact on history itself. For Nietzsche the main problem here is: How concepts of good and bad have become good and evil, retrospectively? Nietzsche starts with a claim purporting the beginning of social life we there are two groups of people. There are those he refers to as *Vormenschen* or proto-humans and those who are large in numbers but formless and nomadic type people. Both at the time would have led primitive lives guided by impulses and drives. (Magnus & Higgins: 2003 p105). The *Vormenschen's* morality corresponds to what Nietzsche calls master morality. A morality of aristocratic appeal and which is motivated autonomously by the individual. Nietzsche claims this type of morality predates its antithesis which Nietzsche refers to as slave morality:

Rather it is only with the decline of aristocratic value-judgements that this whole opposition between 'egoistic' and 'un-egoistic' comes to impose itself increasingly in the human conscience. To adopt my own terminology, it is the herd-instinct, which here finally has its chance to put in a word (and to put itself into words)' (*Genealogy* 1: 2).

When the latter group of people became enslaved they socially constructed a type of morality which summarises the Christian ethics, implies Nietzsche. When this group of people became subdued they could no longer express their primordial instincts and drives in the same way as their masters and as a result these drives become inhibited and redirected inwards and thus conscience was developed. Whilst the subdued group begun to struggle with the denial of their will they too constructed a scapegoat in a form of a demon who would then become eventually defeated by a counter-demon in this case the monotheistic God.

Alongside the subdued group, there were those Nietzsche calls ascetic priests who were a superior kind of the subdued individual willing to gain significant influence within the slaves. In order to succeed they imposed a new type of scapegoat, which is that of the slave's own sinfulness. This is also how the mechanism of *ressentiment* was formed. The 'slave moralist's' inferiority is directed towards the 'master moralist' as a cause of the former's frustration. In return the 'slave moralist' acquires a new form of superiority as a good moral agent. Nietzsche takes *ressentiment* forward to argue that the consequences of which are the negation of life. *Ressentiment* encourages a life denying emotion which is incompatible with the natural

expression of instincts and drives and thus deems any resistance to such instincts and drives morally good and the unsuppressed drives of the strong as morally evil. Also, the difference between freedom and repression or “the pathos of distance” (*Genealogy* 1: 2) in Nietzsche’s own words, it led to a new revaluation of values: good becoming morally evil and bad becoming morally good. The *ascetic priest* led the slaves to believe that such an adverse attitude toward life and its drives is an actual form of power which had been exchanged with the power previously present in the individual, the animal-like drive. This Nietzsche calls the *first revaluation of values* within the slaves (*Genealogy* 1: 7).

The monotheistic tradition for Nietzsche would have been brought about in a similar mindset as the *slave morality* whereby, its adherents see themselves as lesser individuals compared to their ancestors. Nietzsche maintains that the longer back the religious individual attempts to trace their ancestry, the more powerful their ancestors appear to have been thus creating ‘ancestor worship’. This type of genealogy for Nietzsche leads inevitably to the omnipotent father of all which is the God of classical theism. The role of the God of classical theism fits in coherently in the notion of the religious *metaphysical need* which in turn can to some extent be the ‘projection of human’ desires. Ludwig Feuerbach’s *The Essence of Christianity* 1848 whose central thesis is that the God of classical theism is the projection of human desires.

More broadly, Nietzsche’s general argument against religion is that it deeply relies on what has been historically and methodologically criticised, including mystical experience. So, either there is no such thing as mystical experience or there may be one but it is unattainable and impractical’ (Magnus & Higgins: 2003 p99). Nietzsche’s ‘genealogy’ and Feuerbach’s ‘projection’<sup>21</sup> allude to different explanation for the belief in the God of classical theism. Nietzsche finds religion a nuisance to the life of the individual. For him, the belief in Christian God distracts the individual from this current life, by attempting to engage and connect with a transcendental being whose whereabouts are perceived to belong to another world and which for Nietzsche is nothing more than an illusion.

In Feuerbach, ‘projection’ would have emotionally emancipated the individual by increasing their esteem for life through an association with God whether the God of classical theism actually exists or not. Nietzsche’s stance on the individual’s relationship with an omnipotent deity is not in any way empowering. In the case of God of the adherents of slave morality outlined above, all the esteem from the individual about themselves is attributed to God the father by negating the respect for life and the self:

The Christian conception of God [...] is one of the most corrupt conceptions of God arrived at on earth [...] God degenerated to the contradiction of life, instead of being its transfiguration and eternal. Yes in God a declaration of hostility towards life, nature, the will to life! God the formula for every calumny of ‘this world’, for every lie about ‘the next world’! In God nothingness deified, the will to nothingness sanctified [...] (*The Anti-Christ* 18).

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<sup>21</sup> Feuerbach maintains that the human unrealisable desire to be all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, everlasting, etc, psychologically projects an illusion that there must be an entity that carries all these divine attributes. All the individual need to do from now on is to associate with such a projection as closely as possible. Feuerbach concludes that God is the projection of human desires

The individual treats the current life with complacency and as a result leads a ‘life denying’<sup>22</sup> existence. Not only that, but even the direct actions of this God are life-negating on top of the life-negating action which have already been jettisoned to create this Feuerbach-ian special relation with God. Robert Wicks illustrates the reason why even a direct relationship with God is life-negating. This may be because the God of classical theism is believed to be the absolute moral judge and one who condemns the individual's animal urges mainly associated with reproduction for which sexuality is necessary but also other types of instinctual energies such as the lust to rule and selfishness. These instinctual tendencies often referred to by psychologists as ‘libidinal’ Nietzsche finds them natural and embedded into the human nature. To remove these natural tendencies, it must be life-negating and this also inflicts a sense of guilt and inhibition to the individual (Wicks: 2002 p56). Such process of repressing natural tendencies may result even in poor mental health. ‘As far as Nietzsche can see, this theistic outlook amounts to a form of madness, and he reasons that the kind of sickness which he sees the European Christians as having been infected is a mental illness’ (Wicks: 2002 p56). This is because according to Wicks such an effect on the individual denies the instinctual energies which is responsible of maintaining the organism’s health and mental balance (Wicks: 2002 p56).

Although the eradication of faith may be able to free the individual from as Wicks puts it: an ‘illness’. for Nietzsche, there are other aspects in the life of the individual which need to be overcome and that even includes the personality of the individual herself. Nietzsche’s infrastructure for “overcoming” riddles in life rests on two key assumptions: First, the individual is haunted by their own will to power where at times such will must be embraced as it stands in opposition to the ascetic ideals and at other times the will to power becomes excessive and leads to suffering. Second, there must be a critical apparatus within the individual which is set up to assess the way in which such will to power is exercised, and this is through the process of the eternal recurrence as a thought experiment. The next section evaluates the nature of the *will to power* and the *eternal recurrence*.

### **The Will to Power and Eternal Recurrence: Fact and Fiction**

Central to Nietzsche’s themes are the ideas of the *will to power* and the *eternal recurrence*. At the outset, these two themes would seem to relate to cosmic *phenomena* in some form of natural laws. Such laws may purport to the mechanisms of the continuity and the dynamics of the *cosmos*. The *will to power* ensures the dynamics of the universe and the *eternal recurrence* maintains the constant flux of the will to power as a cosmic phenomenon which ensures the continuity of the *will to power* within the *cosmos*. These two *themes* at first closely resemble mythology on creation and purpose of the universe also found in religion. The question here is why does Nietzsche feel the need to point out at the *will to power* and the *eternal recurrence*? It may not be possible to come to any conclusion about the context in which Nietzsche presents the *two themes*. However, the discussion on the context of the two may enable us to have a contextual stance (literal or figurative) on other themes which are crucial to the thesis such as the nature of the *Übermensch*. In a sense we are using some form of induction as a method for

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<sup>22</sup> This is to illustrate Nietzsche’s notion of the negation of life when the individual is unable and/or unwilling to grasp what life bestows on them. Nietzsche maintains that the *will to power* is precisely this gift to the individual

trying to understand the substance of Nietzsche's *themes*. The idea of the *Übermensch* is treated with the same sense of ambiguity by Nietzsche's scholars. That is whether Nietzsche treats these *themes* as factual (in the case of the *Übermensch* as a prophesy) or as metaphors to present other polemics.

What the *will to power* and the *eternal recurrence* have in common which other *themes* do not, is that these two themes confront the reader with a sense of fatalism. Whether these *two themes* be factual or fictional their fatalist essence remains, and it might be that Nietzsche presents these *two themes* in order for them to have a personal appeal to the reader. In this way, Nietzsche is able to apply his *themes* to construct a type of a social engineering which is existentialist by nature.

For Maudemarie Clark Nietzsche would appear contradictory if he was to treat the *two themes* as factual. This is because on the one hand he rejects the real world and on the other he tries to make assumptions about the existence of certain cosmic *phenomena* such as the *eternal recurrence* and the *will to power* (Clark: 1990 p4). This leaves Nietzsche's stance on truth open to discussion. Scholars differ in how they interpret Nietzsche's claims about the existence of such phenomena. Whether that be that Nietzsche refers to the ideas of the *will to power* and the *eternal recurrence* in a literary or figurative sense or both. Walter Kaufmann maintains that Nietzsche does not reject truth entirely and especially when making epistemological claims such as: it is raining. Nietzsche rejects metaphysical claims about the external world in particular the existence of the God of classical theism and that of a natural moral code that seeks to classify actions as good or evil.

According to Kauffman's view, Nietzsche cannot admit the existence of cosmic *phenomena* such as the *eternal recurrence* and the *will to power* as true events occurring in the external world, instead these two must be analogies which Nietzsche uses to express his own understanding of how the world might appear to the individual and how the individual sees oneself within it (Clark: 1990 p5). In *Nachlass* (1906) Nietzsche famously describes the world (the universe) as a will to power with its complexity and diversity, striving aimlessly and eternally:

And do you know what "the world" is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror?  
This would: a monster of energy, without beginning without end; ... a sea of forces  
flowing and rushing together eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with  
tremendous years of recurrence... This my Dionysian world of the eternally self -  
creating, the eternally self - destroying... This world is the will to power - and  
nothing besides! and you yourselves are the will to power - and nothing besides!  
(*Nachlass* 1067).

Cosmos is driven by the will to power and with it becomes a striving super organism autonomous and self-sustainable where all its components, also incorporating humans are here to serve its will.

The idea of the universe as a constant flux of change and movement motivated by a will<sup>23</sup> was not initially put forward by Nietzsche. As mentioned earlier, the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer had a considerable impact on the early Nietzsche's philosophical development.

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<sup>23</sup> Which may not necessarily have an aim or a provenance

Nietzsche needs Schopenhauer's philosophy to illustrate the former's own genealogy of the *will to power* to locate the individual place in the world, without necessarily giving any credit to the rest of Schopenhauer's philosophy of *will*.

Despite Schopenhauer's high regard for the religious *metaphysical need*, the *cosmic will* is in no way identifiable with the Heraclitian idea that 'God is the thunderbolt that steers all things' but the will itself. Although the *will* may not be epistemologically knowable, the individual may be unified with the *will* by surrendering to the *cosmic will* and thus continue to exist as part of something bigger. On the one hand the *will* unifies the individual with the rest of the world and on the other: an illusion occurs where the individual believes the *will* was always their own. The quintessential consequence of the cosmic will is that the process of willing compels the individual to will or desire without limit and to seek unachievable aims. As a result, the consequence of the unfulfilled willing is frustration. Suffering becomes inevitable for as long as the *will* is present. This point affirms Schopenhauer opinion of religion (as unitary of the whole of existence) and its relation to his philosophy and pessimism (as the perpetual presence of the painful and mighty *will*). Nietzsche's idea of the *will to power* and the *eternal recurrence* was substantially inspired by Schopenhauer and it is by pointing this out to the individual that Nietzsche seeks to make his point.

Should this be the essence of existence then the individual should master all that existence assigns to them in order to maximise ones' own potential as well as to overcome the possible riddles in life and including the overcoming challenges even from within the self. Nietzsche differs from Schopenhauer as he rejects the latter's pessimism. Nietzsche believes he can produce an optimistic philosophy which can address the riddles caused by the *will*. He sees the *will* as the *will to power* which is not necessarily at odds with the individual. The *will to power* should be affirmed altogether with its possible negative consequences. Nietzsche presents the affirmation of life in the form of a social engineering. Setting up methods of affirming what is inevitable and overcoming what is a burden to the individual. Nietzsche believed, he could see a way of freeing life from the unnecessary overcomplexities which the human understanding had accumulated over a considerably long period of time by fatalist accounts of existence.

It is not the *will to power* which carries out the task of a thought experiment but the *eternal recurrence* instead. This is because the former appears to be more descriptive in nature than the latter by trying to disclose a profound secret of the world whether that secret is factual or dwells within our imagination. The eternal recurrence on the other hand closer fits into the description of a thought experiment and which at same holds proscriptive values. Regardless of whether or not time repeats identical event, the imaginary recurrence of one's life inevitably seeks the question: Would one choose to re-live a given event over again? The answer to which may be determined by the quality of such an event or even the individual's life hitherto. In *The Gay Science* (1882) Nietzsche famously presents a dilemma which presupposes that if an individual is content with how they have lived their life, it would logically follow that they would not object to living their life again:

What if a demon... said to you: "This life, as you live it, and have lived it, you will have to live once more, and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakably small and great in thy life must come to you again, and all in the same series and sequence.... Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth,

and curse the demon that spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment in which you would answer him: "You are a God, and never did I hear anything so divine!" If that thought acquired power over you as you are, it would transform you, and perhaps crush you; the question with regard to all and everything: "Do you want this once more, and also for innumerable times?" would lie as the heaviest burden upon your activity! Or, how would you have to become favourably inclined to yourself and to life, so as to long for nothing more ardently than for this last eternal sanctioning and sealing?' (*The Gay Science* 34)

The above passage: *The Heaviest Weight* extracted from *The Gay Science* (1882) succeeds in logically concluding that the preference as to whether one would like to re-live their life events indicates the quality and such events and also whether such events are favourable to the agent, however it does not state what kind of events are worthy of being re-lived. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole does mention in his fragmental works time and time again how the individual can go about being involved in events which might be worthy of being re-lived.

The question as to whether Nietzsche sees the *eternal recurrence* and the *will to power* as factual still remains open to debate. Whatever the case may be the presence of the *eternal recurrence* and the *will to power* either as factual or as perception in both cases elaborates on how the individual relates to life. Nietzsche must therefore use the narratives of the *eternal recurrence* and the *will to power* in order to facilitate his own 'proscriptive' philosophy. He does so by using the *two themes* in the form of a thought experiment. This is by acquainting the ideas of the *eternal recurrence* and the *will to power* to the individual which might enact as an orientation to the individual's life. Nietzsche might imply that: the *will to power* must be recognised as a perspective at least - regardless of whether or not there is such thing as a cosmic will which could be the driving force of the former. A perceptive understanding of the *will to power* is important for Nietzsche as it prompts self-realisation and the ability to overcome riddles in life.

The *two themes* act as a locus point to motivating the individual by reiterating the need to recognise the importance of participation in the world of will and eternal recurrence. For this reason, Nietzsche's existentialist philosophy can be defined through the notions of the *will to power* and the *eternal recurrence* as two of the most central components of his philosophy. If one is to accept the two of Nietzsche's claims as important guidelines to their life, they would already begin to establish an aim in life, for which the participation in the *will to power* (where the individual is a component of the *will*) and the method for measuring the worthiness of an event through the desirability of its recurrence, for Nietzsche may be the means to the maximisation of the worth of life.

## **New Paradigms?**

The aim of this chapter was to introduce the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper as developing from criticism. Looking at the presentation of the two philosophers, we find their philosophies focus on different aspects of the philosophical tradition. Nietzsche was a continental philosopher whose themes, polemics, perspectivism and the rejection of *wissenschaft* reflect heavily on the ethos of continental philosophy with a primary focus on

human experience and perception. Popper on the other hand belongs to the analytic tradition of philosophy with a focus on the analysis of language, mind, knowledge, logic, etc. The analytic tradition is evident in Popper's two problems and his account for the growth of scientific knowledge. Although we have noted themes of morality, religion, psychology in Nietzsche and science and empirical knowledge in Popper, for two completely different ontologies (scientific knowledge and the individual's pursuit of values) we can already observe the two philosophers sharing similarities in their concerns within the schools of thought they represent.

As we have already seen, Nietzsche and Popper give a separate critical assessment of metaphysics. From then on, they intended to present their alternative procedure to metaphysics from which they can develop their philosophies. For Nietzsche, it was *perspectivism* and for Popper, the *criterion of demarcation*. Nietzsche presents his philosophy in the form of a variety of fragments while Popper offers a systematic line of enquiry in his philosophy. In face of all these discerning differences, Nietzsche and Popper share a sense of rebellion against the normativity in philosophy, science and society by offering a 'paradigm' to their readers. It would be accurate to call their output a 'paradigm' as both thinkers put forward ideas which stand in exact opposition to the orthodoxy of beliefs particularly on morality and science. To elaborate further, the orthodoxy of morality depicts morals as inherently good and sincere. In *Genealogy* we say how Nietzsche treats the origins of morality with contempt. Likewise, the orthodoxy of the understanding of the growth of scientific knowledge assumes the growth of scientific knowledge must be directly proportional to the frequency of empirical testing as the only increasing variable responsible for the growth of scientific knowledge, constitutes to be empirical testing alone. Popper confronted the logical positivists which the paradigm of the growth of knowledge deriving from falsification of hypotheses.

The next chapter, looks into the gradual philosophical process of Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies by enforcing their paradigms in two ways: First, as a persistent philosophical process where Nietzsche's polemics meet their solutions and likewise Popper successfully applies his philosophy of science into his political thought. Second, the perpetual process of their philosophical development takes the form of a struggle between challenging a pre-existing orthodoxy (as we saw earlier in this chapter) by confronting it with a heretic counter-argument. We should be able to test the possible continuity of the process of orthodoxy and heresy and consequently will be able to see a compatibility between what becomes of the two philosophical processes, namely, Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering and Popper's *piecemeal social engineering*.



## Chapter 5: Popper's Social Philosophy and Politics of Identity

Popper's position in epistemology and particularly the philosophy of science finds echoes also in his social and political philosophy. He re-emphasises the significance of the appropriate methodology in the natural sciences, but he also stresses the differences between natural and social sciences. For instance, one way in which his view in the philosophy of science works critically in the discussion of *historicism* is by pointing out that hypotheses in the social sciences, in order to be relevant for the social world, must be empirical and falsifiable. But he thinks that to attempt to simply apply to the social world the methodology of science overlooks the significant differences between natural and social sciences. The pursuit of formulating laws in history – whether or not falsifiable – are taxed by Popper as confused and dangerous.

The aim of the investigation into Popper's political and social philosophy is twofold: first, to define the extent to which Popper's philosophy of science permeates into his political and social philosophy; secondly, to see how Popper defines his idea of the open society by rejecting a historicist discourse about society in general. As I have mentioned, Popper's philosophy of science will have echoes in his political philosophy and it should not be expected that Popper might have a distinctive type of philosophy and methodology for his political thought. Popper's political philosophy is the context in which he formulates his notion of the open society and what he calls *piecemeal social engineering*<sup>24</sup>. Within the framework of this thesis, its significance is given by the argument that an additional, existentialist type of social engineering must be added to the idea of an open society, in order to maintain the open society<sup>25</sup> open.

To formulate the notion of an open society, Popper must first reject the credibility of what he calls the 'historicists'. He is going to do this in a similar manner to that in which he rejects metaphysical hypotheses as unfalsifiable. Popper's argument for the idea of an open society is presented mainly in two of his works: *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957) and *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945).<sup>26</sup> The former identifies the problem of *historicist* political thought, whereas the latter identifies the problem of what Popper calls the *enemies* of the open society, namely Plato, Hegel and Marx. As Roberta Corvi's notes,

whilst Popper was working with *The Poverty of Historicism* he encountered a problem with Plato's Republic. He set up to develop the former as the foundations of what would become *The Open Society and its Enemies*, as an open society opposed to a 'closed society' with the latter's characteristic belief in magical taboos and its basis in tribal and collective tradition (Corvi: 1997 p52).

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<sup>24</sup> Popper develops the idea of *piecemeal social engineering* as a tool for avoiding the tendency of making bold claims concerning future social events, claims which are specific for historicists.

<sup>25</sup> Popper refers to the open society as a society which is devoid of tribalistic segregation as well as free to make its own decisions without feeling determined by other driving forces namely possible historical laws.

<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that although the latter was published earlier than the former, *The Poverty of Historicism* precedes *The Open Society and its Enemies* in the order of the development of Popper's political philosophy.

Popper's focus on the open society is therefore directed against uncritically accepted traditions and towards a critical attitude of personal responsibility. The solution which Popper offers is therefore not an already prescribed view of society, but derives from his rejection of *historicism* and the philosophies of the *enemies* of the open society. Popper proceeds first with *The Poverty of Historicism* and eventually arrives at *The Open Society and its Enemies*. As we have seen, these are the works in which he identifies two problems (the historicists and the *enemies*), against which he will define his position, in a way similar to his philosophy of science, where his two fundamental problems in the theory of knowledge were the problem of demarcation and the problem of induction.

### **The Advent of Historicism**

This section outlines what Popper refers to as *historicism*. Popper critically presents *historicism* in the form of a polemic against ideologies which could prove dangerous to the society in particular to the open society. He sees *historicism* not as political propaganda, but as an academic exercise which at first appears innocuous. O'Hear maintains that Popper's aim in both *The Poverty of Historicism* and *The Open Society and its Enemies* is that of attacking totalitarianism and its intellectual supporters. (Honderich: 1999 p153) For this reason, Popper makes an elaborate analysis as to why *historicism* must be rejected and uses all of his available critical tools, including his philosophy of science, to reject *historicism*. Before Popper initiates his critique of the historicist schools of thought, he praises *historicism* for raising questions about the extent to which the social world can be studied as if it were the natural world. Following this positive appraisal, however, Popper dedicates most of the work to a critique of *historicism*.

Popper begins his analysis in *The Poverty of Historicism* by trying to bring together natural and social sciences. The scientific interest in social and political questions is almost as old as the scientific interest in the natural world, particularly in physics (*PH*: p1). However, social sciences are still to emulate the success of the natural sciences: 'Social sciences have not yet found their Galileo' (*PH*: p1). Instead, social sciences have remained underdeveloped and have remained so in spite of the efforts of those he calls historicists, who claim to make social predictions. Thus, according to Popper,

I mean by historicism an approach to the social sciences which assumes that "historical prediction" is of their principal aim and which assumes that the same is attainable by discovering the 'rhythms' or the 'patterns' or the 'laws' or the 'trends' that underlie the evolution of history (*PH*: p3).

Just like the scientists, historicists make empirical observations about the social world and try to formulate hypotheses in order to gain an understanding of the collective behaviour of society. Historicists claim that social *phenomena* are determined by historical laws and, if such laws are discovered, we can have a clear understanding on how society works and also be able to apply historical laws to make future social predictions. Historicists also claim that historical laws can be as reliable as the natural laws allegedly discovered by science but different historicists disagree on the origin of historical laws.

Some hold that historical laws are part of the natural world; others maintain that historical laws only apply to the social world, but behave similarly to natural laws. As a result, Popper distinguishes two historicist schools of thought, in *The Poverty of Historicism*, pro-naturalism and anti-naturalism. (PH: p2). The aim for Popper here is to first outline the two different historicist schools of thought, in order to critically assess them after that. The pro-naturalist historicists claim that the laws of history are similar to the laws of the natural world and that history is an area where we can make empirical observations. Insofar as pro-naturalists endeavour to identify absolute laws of history, Popper does not find it difficult to challenge them, as his two fundamental problems of the theory of knowledge (the problem of induction and the problem of demarcation), provide him with the sufficient critical apparatus to do so. The same apply for the case for the anti-naturalists who hope to identify the eternal law of social and political progress. More generally, Popper can challenge pro-naturalist by emphasizing the differences between the natural and social sciences.

As for the anti-naturalist historicists, he has to put more effort to object to their endeavours than in the former case. This is because the anti-naturalist historicists find themselves closer to the social sciences, as understood by Popper. Instead, he will object to the possible risk of approaching social sciences with the aim of formulating general laws applicable to history in general, even when such laws meet some of the methodological conditions of Popper's philosophy of history. Anti-naturalist historicists maintain that some of the characteristic methods of physics cannot be applied to the social sciences (PH: p4). This is the case for two reasons: first, 'anti-naturalist historicists assert that the historical relativity of social laws makes most of the methods of physics inapplicable to sociology' (PH: p5). Second, the ontology of the social world itself is complex and relative: an ever-changing bundle of variables. Plato would have found a similar problem, but only with regards to the natural world of the constant flux of change, for which he thinks a theory of forms would be necessary. Popper agrees with the historicist claim that the human factor may make the attempt to find social truths close to impossible (PH: p4). It is the human factor that makes social science more complex than natural science when making empirical observations.

In order to present Popper's own stance on the difference between the natural and the social world, we can make reference to one of his papers on metaphysics: the *three worlds*. Though it is not intentionally presented by Popper as a critique of *historicism*, the *three worlds* would enable us to see the position of both Popper and the historicists with regard to the social world and its relation to the natural world. For Popper, there are three worlds: *world 1* refers to the natural world; *world 2* is the world of the mental phenomena and subjective experience; and *world 3* is the combination of the *worlds 1* and *2* in the form of an independent reality created by humans, which includes scientific theories, arts, myths, and social norms. On the one hand, *world 3* is constructed by human agency and, therefore, is more similar to *world 2* than to *world 1*, since *world 1* is independent of human agency; yet, on the other hand, *world 3* is more similar to *world 1* than to *world 2*, as both make intersubjective knowledge possible.

What the *three worlds* entail for Popper is that the social world, belonging mainly to *world 3*, is brought about by factors which a) cannot be completely known by empirical knowledge even in principle and b) are sometimes brought about unintentionally and without a systematic plan. What historicists are trying to do is as follows: Pro-naturalist historicists treat *world 3* as if it were *world 1*, and, for Popper, that would mean to overlook some crucial distinctions. Anti-naturalist historicists treat *world 3* as entirely dependent on *world 2*, and Popper also rejects

this view. Popper believes that *world 3* is the result of the combination of *world 1* and *world 2*, but it is not simply reducible to them.<sup>27</sup>

Popper's main concern is with how historicists go about making claims about the social world, namely, by trying to accumulate knowledge and understanding of the society by looking at its history. Regardless of the type of historicism in question (whether that be, pro- or anti-naturalist), it remains problematic, because, whether or not with the aid of the methodology of natural sciences, it tries to formulate hypotheses and generalizations about history. Thus, Popper reacts to 'one of the characteristic claims of *historicism*, namely, [...] 'that history, political and social, is the only empirical science of sociology' (*PH*: p34-35).

Popper might agree with the historicist when they claim that just as a scientist's job is to make empirical observations in nature, the job of the social scientist is to make empirical observations which can only be found in past events, such as in history itself. However, Popper's concern is with a number of issues he identifies in this approach. For instance, historicists assert that history can only be understood through theories, and an empirical observation in history is methodologically no different from an empirical observation in the natural world. However, hypotheses in natural sciences are general claims, and the social world is less amenable to generalizations than the natural world. Social generalizations, on the one hand, undermine the variables which derive from the complexities of the social factors (including psychological, cultural and demographic) and also lead to socio-political problems including prejudice and tyranny. Moreover, Popper is also concerned with the historicist tendency to construct a super hypothesis or 'grand narrative' for the entire history.

The aim of such historical theory is to deduce from empirical observations in history, patterns of behaviour of historical events which might persuade the historian to believe that history has its own set of laws. As mentioned above, the nature of *world 3* is such that objective knowledge is possible and as a result, historicists look for uniformity of behaviour. However, history for Popper cannot correspond to any theory for the reasons outlined in the previous paragraph, instead he would agree with David Hume on the assumption that anything can cause anything and that includes historical events. But how do historicists deduce that there must be historical laws? Historicists claim that sociology is theoretical history (*PH*: p35). For the historicist (the pro-naturalist in particular) sociology is the appropriate science which applies to the social world and should be permitted for the growth of social empirical knowledge just as natural science is permitted to do so. The way they deduce it according to Popper is as follows:

'One historicist group asserts that history, which does not merely enumerate facts but attempts to present them in some kind of casual connection, must be interested in the formulation of historical laws, since causality means, fundamentally, determination by law' (*PH*: p135).

For the historicists, these laws pre-exist in the form of objective knowledge and there must be a "genealogy" with a uniform set of laws which arouses historical events in accordance with its own conditions of sociology. The historicist assumption above supports Hegel's idea of a historical *Geist* which eventually reveals itself. Popper claims that such an assumption leads to

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<sup>27</sup> To borrow J. S. Mill's terminology, one could say that *worlds 1* and *2* combine into *world 3* in a chemical and not merely mechanical way.

the conclusion that: ‘the essence of the real character of a social group can reveal itself, and can be known only through its history’ (*PH*: p3).

### **Popper’s Philosophy from Nature to Culture**

This section outlines the occasions which Popper allows for the natural and the social sciences to share similarities on methodological level. Popper’s project is to apply the basis for his philosophy of science to that of social science mainly through the two fundamental problems of the theory of knowledge: the problem of demarcation and the problem of induction. T. E. Burke notes that Popper’s philosophy of science and his theory of knowledge in general is evident in his approach to social science (Burke: 1983 p132). It is important to note that Popper was merely a philosopher of science and as such he elaborated on the theories of knowledge from a philosophical perspective rather than making any scholarly contribution to the growth of knowledge per se in any sphere of academia. This should be sufficient in distinguishing Popper from both scientists and historicists. Popper’s allows only the methodology of his philosophy of science to correlate with social science.

Both the natural and social sciences have different ontologies, that is they try to acquire empirical knowledge from different sources. At first this should present a problem which is the principles of one sphere of life cannot necessarily be applied to another. As established in the first part of the thesis, Popper defines a theory as scientific if it can be falsifiable. The same applies to social science. Popper feels inclined to apply his philosophy of science to social science for as long as it can be concluded that a socio-scientific theory which makes claims to empirical (and social) knowledge must also be falsifiable. This is because like in the natural sciences, social knowledge is also empirical. Popper should not face the same problem as the ones directed at different historicist schools of thought; though some scholars believe scientific methods can be applied to social science and others rejecting such claims. The reason why Popper’s application of his philosophy of science to the social sciences survives criticism in a way that the claims of pro-naturalist historicists do not, is that Popper is not adding anything (such as grand narrative) to social science from natural science.

However, there are a number of underlying fundamental differences between the structure of natural science and social science which Popper must address. Since Popper is using the assumptions drawn from his philosophy of science it might be that his compatibility with social sciences is limited. Furthermore, Popper is carrying out two tasks at once: On the one hand he is promoting his philosophy of science to social science and on the other he is formulating a convincing critique against historicism where some historicist claims do not contradict Popper namely the pro-naturalist historicist argument, that scientific methods in natural science can be compatible with social science. As mentioned above *historicism* belongs to both schools of thought: the pro-naturalist and the anti-naturalist. This creates challenges for Popper as his critique may succeed in defeating one of the schools of thought of *historicism* rather than both. Some fundamental differences between natural and social sciences are indisputable. The two sciences cannot always correlate to one other as they look at radically different *phenomena*. The environment in which social science operates differs from that of the natural science. To return once again to the *three worlds*: the concerns of *world 1* are independent of the concerns of *world 3* ‘Methodological essentialism, what is matter? What is justice? Versus methodological nominalism, how do things behave’ (Burke: 1983 p136-37).

There are times when both sciences have a mutual objective which is to acquire empirical knowledge although of different kind and there are times when their objectives are not relevant to Popper's methodology (his philosophy of science). This sets a number of challenges even when it comes to empirical knowledge. Herbert Keuth maintains that Popper accepts the possibility of knowledge in social science for as long as it is fallible, but there are certain kinds of knowledge such as ethical knowledge which remain impossible. Also, 'nothing is pre-given in the social world in the same way that natural facts exist independently. The closest to social facts is to accept that judgements about the social world are simply desires'. (Keuth: 2005 p193). The fundamental differences between natural and social science may not necessarily present a problem for Popper's philosophy of science as an application to the social sciences for as long as the *two fundamental problems* are compatible with the social sciences. For instance, the problem of induction would treat instances in empirical social observations no different to instances of empirical observations of the natural world. However, when a particular aspect of Popper's philosophy of science fails to correlate to social science, Popper must set the limits of his own philosophy of science.

This may be because, central to Popper's critique of *historicism* is the latter's inability to comprehend and formulate a general social law whether that be a pro-naturalist or an anti-naturalist historicist. As already established this may be because there are no unchanging laws in the social world<sup>28</sup>. Popper often relates to the difference between astrophysics and the predictability of an eclipse within the scientific discipline and the unpredictability of the social world. In the event of predicting an eclipse, the conditions are stable or if not certain. Variables change according to an orderly uniformity. In the case of predicting social and historical events there are no such uniformities. This is because there is no unchanging law (if no laws at all) which can determine the social world. Popper does not rule out the process of cause and effect which may bring about change in a way that certain social phenomena can be a by-product of other social or even natural *phenomena*. But this does not necessarily allude to determinism of social events only because social *phenomena* may derive from an origin. The nature of social change does not possess any form of intentional agency whereby social change is either determined by other factors (social structures) acting as an authority or a genealogy. Neither is social change aware of itself, institutions do not shape the society but only have some influence.

This does not necessarily imply that social knowledge is not empirical, the *criterion of demarcation* would be valid to the social world but with its own limitations. The problem here is that claims to social knowledge are possible without being falsifiable. This is evident in qualitative and quantitative social research. To advocate the application of the *criterion of demarcation* into social science, it could be argued that a demarcation is possible between the social sciences and the so called: arts and humanities where knowledge of only the former hold an empirical content. Another opportunity to put the criterion of demarcation to the test is to test it against what Popper contemplates as historicist prophesy, to which I shall turn in the next section.

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<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that Popper does not necessarily deny the existence of social laws but only rejects the possibility of historical laws. Examples of social laws include: the possible laws of economics, the possible laws of psychology, etc. Popper rejects historical laws and stresses the possibility of social trends.

## Popper's Second Demarcation: Prophetic versus Technological

Popper's argument against historicists develops further. Even when he feels he had to give some significance to scientific predictions Popper sets out the conditions for which he can give credit to a scientific prediction in both the natural and the social science. Popper distinguishes between two types of scientific predictions in the following examples: there are those predictions concerning the possibility that something will happen (in Popper's example): a typhoon; and a second kind of prediction, that of predicting what to do about the typhoon such as the course of action to be taken for protection. The former Popper refers to as a 'prophecy' and the latter as 'technological' which is the basis of engineering (or social engineering to be more precise). The difference between the two is that the former employs non-experimental observations and the latter experimental observations. All science according to Popper is experimental (with the exception of astronomy and meteorology being non-experimental but empirical). How do historicists make social predictions?

*Historicism* treats sociology as a theoretical history by applying methods which rule out experimental and scientific attempts at historical events. The method in question is the application of sociology as astronomy and meteorology but for predicting future historical events. Since such events belong to the future, hypothetical predictions cannot already be challenged against empirical testing and since there are no instances of empirical observations, falsification is not possible prior to the event in question taking place. For the historicist, the alleged possibility of historical laws are sufficient in making social predictions. Therefore, the initial role of sociology according to historicism is to treat sociology as a machine capable of making accurate social predictions (Keuth: 2005 p194). This gives historicists the legitimacy to make prophecies.

In this way, the historicists' approach to social science rules out any alternative method for social science most notably the natural scientific method which for Popper finds useful to the social sciences. This is the technological account of social science but which stands in opposition to non-experimental method put forward by the historicists. It is Popper's philosophy of science that invites the technological approach to social science and like natural science itself must be subject to falsification and empirical testing whereas the prophetic account remains unfalsifiable. It could be argued that Popper makes this distinction between prophecy and the technological approach to social science in order to demarcate social science from pseudo-social science deduced from Popper's assumptions about the technological and the prophetic respectively. If prophecies stand in opposition to the technological account of social science, then prophecies can be nothing more than speculations about *phenomena* in the external world and perhaps of metaphysical nature.

In the *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945) Popper sets out to reject the aspects of Platonic, Hegelian and Marxist philosophies which he deems to be detrimental for the *open society*. In the case of non-experimental methods in social science which Popper deems prophetic, Marx and Hegel are also included in Popper's criticism. For him, the Hegelian claims of an historical *Geist* must be rejected as it the *Geist* can only make sense for as long as we believe historical laws exist. Since, a lot of "Marx-ian" philosophy derives from Hegelian philosophy, Popper too rejects Marx for slightly different reasons. Marx for Popper encourages prophetic philosophies about predicting historical events. Marx does so (as well as Hegel) partly through their dialectic method. A thesis that is challenged by an antithesis will inevitably

produce a synthesis. The latter in turn becomes a new thesis and the dialectic process is repeated again and again. Popper observes that when a thesis is being challenged the only perceived outcome is either the survival of the thesis (corroboration) or its defeat (falsification). The only synthesis in Popper's methodology is that two opposing theses may have something in common even when one defeats the other. For instance, the empirical statement, water boils at 100°C (everywhere) is defeated by the empirical statement: Water boils at 100°C at certain altitudes. The only possible synthesis in this case is in the form of a consensus about the fact that water has a boiling point.

Popper's philosophy of science (and social science) of demarcation and falsification responsible for the growth of empirical knowledge purports to an alternative process to Hegel and Marx's dialecticism. If a corroborated hypothesis survives criticism it becomes more probable, more reliable than before and whilst unchallenged becomes orthodox. When such an orthodoxy is falsified, it is done so by a previously lesser dominant hypothesis. Such a hypothesis initially does not receive a lot of credibility and at its elementary stage may be deemed heretic. It is only when this heretic hypothesis defeats the orthodox hypothesis, that the former acquires an orthodox position. In turn, the orthodoxy is prone to a new challenge by a new emerging heresy. The process of orthodoxy and heresy would be favoured by Popper as a mechanical rather than causal explanation for the refinement of hypotheses as proportional to the growth of knowledge natural and social. This process alongside the technological account of the social sciences forms the basis of *piecemeal social engineering*.

The technological account of the social sciences which Popper encourages the individual to grasp, concerns the practical approaches to be attained by the individual as the only activity for which the individual can have an influence on. Therefore, the individual may only be able to apply Popper's methodology in the form of technological social engineering. The more *piecemeal social engineering* progresses the more it opens up the society. Before we can discover the nature of the *open society* we must first define the closed society since the many foundations of Popper's philosophy derive from his criticism. The critical analysis in *The Poverty of Historicism* and in *The Open Society and its Enemies*, identifies the closed society as emanating from the historicist as utopian social engineering which we will now turn to.

### **Tribalism: Historicist Holism**

Popper has found precisely the nemesis of *piecemeal social engineering*: that of 'utopian social engineering'. He associates historicism with holism and with utopianism. These allegedly work against piecemeal technology and are evident in the *enemies* of the open society, whether that be the historicists or Plato, Hegel and Marx. For Popper, Plato makes a static attempting to arrest all change and Marx a dynamist and a progressivist (*OS v I p 25*). The harm the *enemies* have caused to the open society is the attempt to entirely socially engineer the society. Popper accuses the historicists and the *enemies* for trying to change the society in its entirety by creating a super structure which inevitably has a negative impact on the individual for the very reason those social structures diminish individual agency. Popper, specifically accuses Plato for promoting a closed society in Plato's *Republic* in the form of a city state which divides the society into social classes that must not interact with one another. Change on the other hand for Plato is decay and must be seized. Large-scale planning must apply to the whole of the 'republic'. This may be the case when historicists try to organize large-scale planning in order



to change the society as a whole. Popper comments on holism, a view which perceives all society as one structure with its own deterministic factors. He instead takes a reductionist approach by maintaining that the society is driven by the decisions of the sum of all individuals and such sum does not equal to the whole as in the case of holism. Even the idea of the open society has as a criterion the pursuit for an ethos as the sum of all individuals rather than the society as a whole or as one.

Popper's problem with holism is also problematic with the existentialist as amongst the core principles of existentialist attitude is the recognition of the essence, authenticity and autonomy of the individual. As T. E. Burke puts it:

[i]n his view there is not a single ideal, the discovery of which will direct out efforts, no escape from responsibility of "deciding" what is unacceptable to us in society as we find it, and what steps we should take to bring about the appropriate change. And our decisions determine in essential part, the subsequent development of our society. Popper's 'open society' is in effect a society whose makers characteristically recognize this responsibility for self-determination [...] and in so far as Plato, Hegel and Marx all from different standpoints, deny this responsibility, then whatever their various relationships to historicism they are at one in being enemies of the open society (Burke: 1983 p166).

Popper rightly accuses historicists (including the *enemies* of the open society as historicist) for diminishing the notion of the individual spirit by replacing it with holism which is a prelude to something even more socially problematic and not merely to the individual: the promotion of tribalism. The *open society* and its allies have found their common enemy: *historicism*, but the consequence of which is also the promotion of tribalism. Popper borrows the term from the definition of referring to tribal superstitious closed societies but uses 'tribalism' not to refer to such societies but to the aftermath of the closed society. This may promote the monistic (mono-tribalistic) society as socially engineered by the likes of historicists which may even escalate the problem further when more than one 'tribes' are made to clash in the form of a Huntingtonian 'clash of civilizations'<sup>29</sup>.

### **Social Engineering: From Historicist to Piecemeal**

The section above introduced *historicism* from a pro-naturalist and anti-naturalist accounts where Popper's main point of concern rested on the historicist's non-experimental method for social science: that of prophesizing. The following section illustrates Popper's journey into what he calls *piecemeal social engineering*. Such engineering derives from a resistance against *historicism* and to its utopian social engineering. For the historicist, social science is nothing but theoretical history. *Historicism* is the study of operative forces and of the laws of social development. Historicists do not believe that there are absolute social facts but historical laws which permit change. Further to his technological social engineering above, Popper proposes

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<sup>29</sup> Samuel P. Huntington claims that societies are separated into different regional and cultural groups which by nature are set to clash when in the company of one other. Some civilisations can be more hostile to each other than others.

a methodology which aims at 'technological social science' as an attempt to collectively find common grounds in social life as the basis of everyone jointly seeking to reform social institutions (PH: 59). As pointed out in the previous section, Popper distinguishes between prophesy and technological methodology:

‘Piecemeal social engineering resembles physical engineering in regarding the ends as beyond the province of technology (All that technology may say about ends is whether or not they are compatible with each other or realisable). In this it differs from historicism, which regards the ends of human activities dependent on historical forces and so within its province’ (PH: 59)

This draws a clear line between the historicist stance and that of Popper. He directly advances from rejecting historicist prophecy to a practical ethic: the application of methods for social science directly to the current state of affairs which in this case are the reformation and social engineering of the institutions. ‘Whereas historical experience would serve as the most important source of information’ (PH: 60). Instead of trying to find laws of social development it would look for variables which impose limitations upon the construction of social institutions which is part of the process of *piecemeal social engineering*.

What can be identified in *historicism* is the social engineering of the society as a whole. Though Popper offers his own type of social engineering, he allows to draw similarities with the historicists only through the form of social engineering from the historicist but applies his own content. In Popper’s own words:

‘The term 'social technology' is likely to arouse suspicion and to repel those whom it reminds of 'social blueprints' of the collectivist planners or perhaps even of the 'technocrats'. I realize this danger and so I have added the word 'piecemeal' both to off-set undesirable associations and to express my convictions that 'piecemeal tinkering' (as it is sometimes called), combined with critical analysis, is the main way to practical results in the social as well as in the natural sciences’ (PH: 53).

As a result, Popper applies the term 'piecemeal' to prevent from misunderstanding the term 'social engineering'. ‘This approach which, ought indeed to be called the classical one, it is what I have in mind when I refer to the technological approach to social science, or to 'piecemeal social technology' (PH: 53). This type of social engineering is set up to determine the boundaries of epistemological honesty in a way that only what is knowable can be assessed so that it can be controlled by human agency. ‘The piecemeal technologist or engineer recognizes that only a minority of social institutions are designed while the vast majority are just grown’ (PH: 59). Some institutions which appear to have been intentionally constructed are not necessarily so, although there is strong evidence that such institutions, just because they have been brought about by human agency, they must therefore have been engineered. The same would apply to history itself.

If one is to revisit Popper’s argument about the *three worlds* above, one would find a world influenced by human agency but without deliberately constructing *world 3* by the human agency. It is important to note that Popper is not intending to neither grow scientific knowledge nor open up the society. He is instead making explanations as to how knowledge and social freedoms grow, namely moving away from what Popper perceives as problematic in natural and social science such as the *two problems* on the one hand and holism and tribalism on the

other. It is inevitable that Popper's philosophy appeals to scientists and members of the society alike when trying to grow empirical knowledge and social freedom. In a sense his philosophy is as much prescriptive as descriptive. It may be that Popper's philosophy may prove helpful in the future in achieving the aims above, so long as we keep Popper away from his unintentional social tinkering. Instead, we should allow Popper to re-interpret the open society in a way that his philosophy correlates with it.

Popper defines his *open society* as a society which is merely devoid of the ideologies of its *enemies* Plato, Hegel and Marx and on the other the methodologies of the historicists for understanding social phenomena and events through speculative historical laws. It is *piecemeal social engineering* which may give some hints on a possible open society which is Popperian. However, since Popper is defining the *open society* for what it is not rather than for what it is, a number of issues appear to emerge.

The open society involves a loss of organic character and as a result it carries the risk of abstractness (Corvi: 1997 p52). The issue here is that not only is the open society without a character which in the social world might bring about chaos, anarchy and conflict. For reasons as such open societies do not go uncriticised. They are governed by social disputes and are not very stable (Corvi: 1997 p52). One of the dangers of the open society is that if left open and abstract enough, its openness might be threatened by 'tribalism' an enemy both the open society and even existentialism have in common. It is at this point that the open society might be in need of alternative types of social engineering which may save guard it from holism, tribalism and historical prophecy.

In response to this risk factor, it can be concluded that Popper's method of opening up the society must offer some social structure. *Piecemeal social engineering* contain its own structure as outlined above but to what extent can it provide the open society with some form of character and structure? Thought Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* derives from criticism, and may in hindsight be understood for what it is not (holistic and utopian social engineering), it nevertheless, offers the *open society* some form of substance. This may be the case for the following reasons. The *open society* which refers to broadly to a Western liberal democracy is not actually open but opening. Just in the same way that scientific knowledge is constantly growing so, are the freedoms in society. Popper implies throughout his social philosophy that the growth in social freedom from his perceived *enemies* grows similarly to the growth of scientific knowledge. More specifically, the growth in social scientific knowledge is proportional to the growth in freedom within a society. Therefore, open societies are not completely open but move towards more open-ness just in the same way that scientists are not omniscient but only growth their scientific knowledge.

Since the open society is more of a process and less of an actuality, for as long as there is a constant growth in social knowledge and social freedom, we should be able to see substantial social progress to highlight the purpose of society which is to serve the individuals. Popper may claim to eliminate the dangers of the *open society* the more it moves away from the *enemies* and their social structures, but the issues of the open society cannot be blamed on the historicists and the *enemies*. Nevertheless, Popper's social philosophy is particularly concerned with the critique of *historicism* and the *open society's enemies*.

In order to expand Popper's promotion of the open society, we could look elsewhere to invite the discussion of a specific social polemics. The politics of identity make a good case for

allowing Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* to be empirically tested on the correlation between the "identity politician's" intentions and *piecemeal social engineering*'s practical success. Furthermore, the open society could benefit greatly when seeking to lose its abstractness, by the existentialism of Nietzsche and the possible correlation between the Popper and Nietzsche's processes.

As discussed at the beginning of the thesis, the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper must be able to correlate with each-other and so should with the politics of identity. Following Popper's critique of *historicism* and the *enemies* of the *open society*, we were able to identify holistic types of social engineering, the closed society, tribalism, and prophesy as polemical. Now we are able to notice common grounds between the polemics of Popper and those polemics in the politics of identity which have been already highlighted above in the thesis.

In the chapter above dedicated solely to the politics of identity, we looked at the revolt of liberation groups against normativism. The former seek social justice from the normativist structure. We also looked at how normativism manifests itself in society as mono-tribalistic and the liberation groups as poly-tribalistic. What could be said at this stage whilst reflecting on Popper's social philosophy is that *mono-tribalist normativism* corresponds to holistic social engineering and that Popper would oppose the former like he opposes the latter. What is worth noting here, is that as I have mentioned, *mono-tribalist normativism* is not necessarily influenced by agency partly because there are no demographic attributes which are themselves problematic. Moreover, we are not able to see in the opening society its *enemies* as real individuals in the way Popper identifies Plato, Hegel and Marx.

Instead, *mono-tribalist normativism* can be treated as a structure rather than agency. If we are to hold this view, we would find that structure is on the one hand analogous to empirical ignorance which needs to be overcome rather than to be culpable and on the other, the structure of *mono-tribalist normativism* can be rejected just in the same way that Popper rejects the dogmas of certain groups of people such as the logical positivist, the Marxist and Hegelians.

We may not be able to allocate the *two problems* within the critique of *mono-tribalist normativism* as consistently (if at all) as in the study of natural science, to liken Popper's polemics with the polemics identified by the various supporters of the politics of identity. If we could, we would then have to temporarily attribute some form of agency<sup>30</sup> to *mono-tribalist normativism* for the reasons that we can apply the *two problems* against the former. The only way to make plausible the possibility to *mono-tribalist normativism* attaining the form of an agent is to look at the structure of demographic prejudice. If demographic prejudice is defined as the belief that a group of people's behaviour, values, beliefs are determined by their demographic attributes, then we can apply Popper's critical apparatus accordingly. We must highlight what kind of behaviour, values and beliefs can be identified as stereo-typical on the one hand and as peculiar (exclusive) to this particular group, on the other. We would say that, the statement must be scientific and thus falsifiable, otherwise it remains speculative (demarcation). The statement would have to undergo the process of *critical rationalism* for it to be scrutinised empirically. If merely one member of this group is observed to not hold the type of characteristics which are deemed stereo-typical, we are then able to falsify the

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<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that, by this I imply, treating *mono-tribalist normativism* as if it was a mere individual, as opposed to referring to a member of public as someone whose demographic attributes, by virtue of not belonging to liberation group must therefore be seen as a member of *mono-tribalist normativism*.

demographically prejudist statement that people are determined by their demographic attributes.

What the falsification of the statement in this case does is, as Popper predicts, it grows socio-scientific knowledge. If we were to carry out more informed empirical observations we would be able to find an explanation as to why a particular individual was mistaken<sup>31</sup>. We would be able to point out at this individual that not only people are not determined by their demographic attributes but also if some of the behaviour of a particular group is deemed stereo-typical, it is by falsification that we may be able to find alternative explanations to a particular type of behaviour which might be deemed by this individual as stereo-typical. It can be concluded for instance that a certain factors can be the cause, such as the stage of puberty or lack of good education, neither of which are demographic attributes.

The main cause for a politics of identity is not so much concerned with prejudice against a particular demographic attribute as it is to highlight social injustice. Popper's political philosophy remains to be applied further to the clash between mono-tribalism and poly-tribalism. What the example concerning prejudice above highlights, is the way in which prejudice is nurtured by lack of knowledge and the problem of induction so long as we are permitted to look at social prejudice from a scientific point of view. It must be emphasised, social injustice is caused exclusively by prejudice but at least mainly by the normavist structure. If we are to continue to engage Popper's philosophy into a dialogue with the politics of identity, we would then have to apply a different Popperian ontology, which lies closer to his political philosophy than his philosophy of science. In which case, we can substitute the growth of knowledge with the growth of freedom. As pointed out above, *piecemeal social engineering* seeks to open the society. Therefore, whenever we apply Popper's philosophy of science, and the growth of socio-scientific knowledge, we do so for the benefit of the growth of freedom to further the *open society*.

An open society would not be possible in the event of injustice and in this case social injustice. Though there may not be an open society yet, we can be permitted to refer to a society which is constantly endeavouring to open up more and more, by rejecting tyranny, social injustice and also all forms of tribalism. If Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* can open up societies or at least explain how societies become open, it can also do the same in the realm of the politics of identity. The presence of *mono-tribalist normativism* prompts Popper to come to the aid of the politics of identity, even if it is for the sake of challenging tribalism only.

Popper would reject *mono-tribalist normativism*, but would also find *poly-tribalist progresivism* problematic. This is because they are both tribalist and in hindsight both sides are deemed problematic. It would also appear that tribalism is actually on the rise from one tribe to many. If we are to look at poly-tribalism, we would find a society made up of smaller societies. The question is: do the sum of all closed societies sum up to one open society? Embracing tribalism within the *open society* goes against the ethos of the latter, even more so when many liberation groups' activists see to promote 'safe spaces' which are public

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<sup>31</sup> It should also be noted that social prejudice against a particular group of people on the grounds of their demographic attributes can be caused by any individual including individuals from within the same group. No one group can be thought to be more judgemental than other demographic groups. In contrast, some demographic groups can be prone to prejudice more than others. Therefore the group of individual I am referring to above does not belong to a particular demographic group.

environments that prohibit any form speech or behaviour which may be thought to ignore the presence of diversity in that particular space.

Nevertheless, if we are to look at both the politics of identity and Popper's philosophy as a whole we would be able to find some form of a chronological development. We would find that as outlined above that open societies are constantly opening up and that the politics of identity has already achieved some success. Both, Popper and the politics of identity hold some piecemeal and progressive structure. To interpret the progressivism of the politics of identity in the terms of the philosophy of Popper, we would find that change from one form of tribalism to another, is similar to the change from one hypothesis to a more detailed hypothesis (or from a falsified to a new and corroborated hypothesis). One could argue that a perfect world is a world where there is not tribalism at all and also a world where we have all the possible knowledge and therefore no longer need to make generalisations. Since this cannot be the case, we can then hope that we can move closer to such perfectionist ideals. By so doing we are growing scientific knowledge as well as growing the social freedom of diverse groups.

We can now look at poly-tribalism with a new paradigm, which that poly-tribalism must be favoured against mono-tribalism just in the same way that one hypothesis is more favourable to another. We must also be aware that even poly-tribalism itself must be open to scrutiny. As mentioned earlier, Popper's philosophy fits in with the process of orthodoxy and heresy. If we are liken the progressive process of the identity politics with Popper's philosophy, particularly *piecemeal social engineering*, we must therefore view the former as a process of orthodoxy and heresy, where *mono-tribalist normativism* becomes the challenged orthodoxy by the (only temporarily) heretic *poly-tribalist progressivism*.

So far, I have outlined Popper's political philosophy as emanating from his philosophy of science. We saw how Popper, through criticism promotes *piecemeal social engineering* as a gradual and progressive force promoting the open society. We also looked at how the politics of identity too is a force for the open society and subsequently were able to find a correlation between Popper's philosophy and the politics of identity. We also concluded that the open society is moving away from tribalism, piecemeal. The next chapter tries to do exactly the same as this chapter but by looking at Nietzsche like Popper.

## Chapter 6: Nihilism and the Revaluation of Values

This chapter's role is to find out if the structure of the polemics and *themes* of Nietzsche's philosophy follow any kind of a philosophical development, just as Popper's philosophy was able to show its developmental process. When looking at Nietzsche's *themes*, we find that those themes which are of polemical nature correspond to the themes Nietzsche deems prescriptive. We also find some of the *themes* to have an ambiguous nature. These *themes* are neither polemical nor prescriptive but descriptive. We find that the *themes* of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* share this tri-fold nature. Nietzsche often treats the *two themes* as polemical, descriptive and prescriptive. These *two themes* are not opposed to one-another but work together. We also find that the two are often used as a bridge between Nietzsche's polemics and their antidote (prescriptive). For this reason, we may feel compelled to investigate whether or not Nietzsche's philosophical process develops from the connection between polemics and their solution through *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. It is worth mentioning, if that was to be the case, it does not necessarily account for all of Nietzsche's developmental process of his philosophy. Instead, it may allow us to test if we can use any consistent process we find in Nietzsche's philosophy for social engineering, in the same way we are able to find *piecemeal social engineering* in Popper's philosophy. For this reason, we must look at the role of the *nihilism* and *revaluation and values* in the Nietzsche's philosophy.

### The Foundations of Nihilism

Nietzsche is generally described as a pessimist and even more pessimistic than that - a nihilist who views life or more specifically: the workings out of the universe as goal-less and aim-less from the super galactic stage all the way to the human life and even smaller-scale aspects of existence. The aimlessness of the universe may not be a problem for Nietzsche as the universe does not necessarily need to have an aim. Instead it is the aimlessness of the human life and ideals brought about by humanity that Nietzsche is more particularly concerned with. For R. Kevin Hill, 'Nietzsche is against truth, dishonesty, science, Romanticism, democracy, capitalism, socialism, morality and decadence' (Hill: 2003 p2). If that should be the case, it would be easy to conclude that Nietzsche's philosophy revolves around what is generally understood by the notion of 'nihilism' as an adversary for anything which claims to hold any kind of value and renders any engagement with life as unproductive.

Nietzsche does not always reject or condemn *nihilism* and it will become clear further below how Nietzsche uses the notion of *nihilism* in his philosophy even to come to the aid of his own philosophy. *Nihilism* in Nietzsche may prove difficult to define for the reasons that it is not yet clear how Nietzsche himself sees *nihilism*; also, Nietzsche is not sufficiently clear with his mantra of *nihilism* and mentions it in different context in a number of his works. Bernard Reginster also admits that Nietzsche's concept of *nihilism* remains elusive. 'He flanks the term "nihilism" in no fewer than eighteen epithets which create a misleading impression that a new qualification has been introduced' (Reginster: 2009, p21) As a result we find ourselves in the

following dilemma: We cannot always remain perplexed about Nietzsche's notion of *nihilism* and therefore we must try to summarise it somehow. This will inevitably be misleading as Nietzsche relates to *nihilism* in different ways.

Katrina Mitcheson claims that *nihilism* in Nietzsche arises from different sources and it is not a mere effect of one cause. Mitcheson believes that Nietzsche's diversity of different nihilisms are somehow interconnected. Such nihilisms culminate from the realisation of valuelessness not necessarily in a cosmic sense but also in the connection between the individual and the world and possible errors the individual makes when she relates to the world. Mitcheson in this case claims that Nietzsche more generally describes *nihilism* as the will to nothingness or nausea which arises in face of our inability for affirmation (Mitcheson: 2013 p73). Mitcheson goes on to say that nihilism does not necessarily relate to the *cosmos* and our relation thereof. *Nihilism* could arise from within the social world about the social world. Another description of *nihilism* for Mitcheson is the contempt for life and for modern man (Ibid).

Mitcheson is already defining *nihilism* as something which is not intrinsically founded in the physical world but which could also apply to other worlds relating to it, namely the social world. *Nihilism* is already beginning to show that it is not merely bound by the definition that life is worth living if there are inspiring goals (Reginster: 2009 p21). It may be straightforward to attribute *nihilism* to the external world alone without assigning nihilism to its participants too. Reginster defines nihilism in Nietzsche as two-fold: Lacking values and lacking attainability. Pessimism and nihilism are closely connected but are also different. The former refers to a world where our values are errors but there is nothing wrong with the world. Whereas in nihilism our values are correct except there is something wrong with the world (Reginster: 2009 p27).

Wherever nihilism may be present it must belong to a domain. Such domain is not necessarily the cause of nihilism *per se* as it does not have to be caused by anything prior to it. Nietzsche needs to find a locus point for his *nihilism* in order to define its working out and how it might permeate from one place to another. We feel compelled to find the location of *nihilism*. The most appropriate means to define such base is to refer to Nietzsche's most popular definition of it. In *Nachlass* published posthumously in 1910 as *The Will to Power* Nietzsche enquires directly about *nihilism*:

What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; "why?" Finds no answer (*Nachlass* 3).

Though this is an ambiguous claim, and the reference which Nietzsche makes to 'the highest values' and how these highest values devalue themselves may not be relevant at this point as we are trying to define *nihilism*'s location and that rests on: 'The aim is lacking and that "why" finds no answer. In other words, Nietzsche for the second part of his analysis on the above passage implies that there is no aim pre-given in life, neither does there have to be a corresponding explanation. This account purports to the possibility that *nihilism* remains a cosmic phenomenon. Should this be the case, the aim for the individual is to realise the presence of cosmic nihilism in the world and to initially rid of all the *phenomena* which at first appeared to have had some value and as a result to assess their values with the awareness that such values are not pre-given as independently as the individual may be led to believe.



The process of affirmation and the *revaluation of values* may require initially an acknowledgement of what appears to be an unbiased and indisputable truth which for Nietzsche is the devaluation of values and the aimlessness of world striving with a will but without a goal. On this occasion *nihilism* does not play any part in the judgement of values and a ‘descriptive’ type of nihilism can only make sense in a cosmic and non-social way. It may be possible that Nietzsche covertly treats *nihilism* as a “cosmic” phenomenon and that the affirmation of life<sup>32</sup> might also include to some extent the affirmation of nihilism. It may draw the individual to realisation and acceptance of the facts of the world in order for them to affirm whatever can be accepted as a brute fact without bias and without giving it a negative or positive value judgement (as it is the case with morality according to Nietzsche) and thus without assessing the worth of their life. However, at face value such a statement is pessimistic and life-negating. Nietzsche may only favour *nihilism* over a possible opposing force to it, if he is to find the latter to be more life-negating than the former. Nevertheless, Nietzsche sees *nihilism per se* as something to be overcome.

Now that we have established that *nihilism* has a cosmic domain. The individual tries to overcome it (where the individual herself is already in the cosmic domain) by creating what has been lacking and that is value creation. The individual is not necessarily aware of the process of values creation as for them some values are simply discovered from the world rather than created. Realist claims enforce this position in many aspects whether that be the existence of the God of classical theism, moral facts, ensoulment, the afterlife and that it has an aim. Nietzsche would agree with the statement that human beings would prefer to live in a world where values exist independent of us and are pre-given rather than to live in a nihilistic world. The individual then goes on to construct a revaluation of values where values are given their worth. Nietzsche does not abruptly disagree with this type of assertion for the accumulation of values in life and it is perhaps the case that Nietzsche’s philosophy prescribes life-affirming ways of living and seeing the world, for the individual to grasp. But for Nietzsche the Christian ideals and ethics: ‘granted man absolute value, as opposed to his smallness and accidental occurrence in the flux of becoming and passing away...In sum: the great antidote of against practical and theoretical nihilism’ (*Nachlass*: 4).

However, for Nietzsche this is problematic in two ways: First, there is a metaphysical problem. There are no values as such which emerge from the external world. Instead as already established, the external world is by nature nihilistic (cosmic nihilism as descriptive) and devoid of such values. The second problem for Nietzsche is that the claims to such value revaluations create a value system in this case the existence of the God of classical theism, God’s plan for humankind in the afterlife and the moral obligations which this value system requests are epistemologically false, charge the individual with unnecessary obligations which inevitably result in the negation of life (artificial nihilism as a polemic). By jettisoning what already exists, which is the presence of the *will to power* in exchange for the obligations of faith and the embrace of ascetic ideals, for Nietzsche, this is one type of nihilism. Thus, the individual’s freedom, the capacity and potential to expand and utilise such freedom is thus wasted.

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<sup>32</sup> In a broad sense this is the willingness to accept one’s condition in life without a contradiction between the actuality the beliefs and emotions which might revolt against such actuality

Furthermore, such belief system with a binary moral judgement of good and evil instigates the feelings of resentment towards someone or something, particularly those who embrace the *will to power*. This value system also persuades the individual to deviate their intention from pursuing the *will to power* as a life affirming force. The individual becomes unwittingly drawn to a life-negating condition devoid of value only because the individual is rejecting what is a pre-given to the individual: the *will to power*. This move draws the individual to a type of nihilism. For Nietzsche, the Judaeo-Christian is not aware of cosmic (descriptive) nihilism but the application of their ideals as 'revelations' as well as the creation of its institutions, are more life-negating than life itself would allow, so this type of artificial nihilism is more nihilistic than the natural cosmic nihilism. The artificial nihilism is also unattainable (as pointed out by Reginster). Nietzsche sees some forms of nihilism more problematic than others. It might be that Nietzsche may assign cosmic nihilism a neutral (0) value as a locus point (or compass) and may define nihilism in relative terms. For instance, if another nihilism, emerges and scores a negative value (-1), which according to Nietzsche is the case with some ideals of faith and morality, then this for Nietzsche is a greater nihilism. If on the other hand, we see Schopenhauer's *will* as a blessing (the *will to power*) rather than a fatalist burden, we have the opportunity to create values endorsed from the will to power (life-promoting) but harvested and created by the individual, then for Nietzsche this moves in the opposite direction to *nihilism*.

## **Nihilism as a Solution**

The idea of nihilism might appear a problem for Nietzsche as for instance the Christian ideals are nihilistic in nature by the negation of life in exchange for an ideal which never existed. However, *nihilism* might also be able to establish a function (which will be outlined below) of annihilating what Nietzsche likes to be annihilated and replaced with his 'solutions'. Thus, a 'nihilism of values' as an annihilation of ideals (Christian ideals) which have previously been regarded as valuable has already established itself as a solution or at least as a means to a solution. Since Nietzsche treats *nihilism* and even the process of the *revaluation of values* with both positive and negative attributes, the question is: does Nietzsche have a pattern in his fragmental philosophy where he might use positive patterns of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* as part of a philosophical process?

Nietzsche does condone the 'murder of God'. For him, the individual's relief comes at the moment of 'the death of God' and it is only when a revaluation of values 'trans-values' what was perceived as valuable: the God of classical theism - to the possibility for a new set of values. For Nietzsche, Christians were spiritually unhealthy because their faith in the Christian God made them unhealthy (Wicks: 2002 p55) For that reason a revaluation of values to replace God would be inevitable. Nietzsche does not express a preference to whatever may replace the religious sentiment instead at this stage Nietzsche is concerned with revoking the religious sentiment from the individual. It was not him who identified the un-sustainability of Christianity, it was the individuals themselves to whom Christianity was no longer appealing. Robert Wicks points out that what Nietzsche saw Christianity decline not because it had lost its spiritual foundations but because such foundations were unsound (Wicks: 2002 p52). To

summarise the causes of the decline of Christianity in Nietzsche's time: Christianity had to decline as it relied on false premises, and second such premises hindered with the emancipation of the individual. As a result the 'death of God' had to be announced figuratively with the demise of the Christian ideals. *The parable of the madman* in *The Gay Science* illustrates Nietzsche's vision:

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!" -- As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated? -- Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. We have killed him -- you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? (*The Gay Science* 125 )

For Nietzsche, the God of classical theism did exist in a figurative sense and was "murdered" by those who no longer needed God. This brings into discussion Nietzsche's context: Is Nietzsche being perspectivist in discussing the "murder" of God? It can only be so, as Nietzsche does not refer to any event in both history and pre-history which may have brought about the death of a real God. The only God that may have died was the God created from the mind of the individual, not only that but also the metaphysical perception of the world which would have brought about the idea of the classical God of theism. Peter R. Sedgwick maintains that the death of God signifies the demise of metaphysical assumptions which have served Christianity and also European culture (Sedgwick: 2009 p31). For Nietzsche, this must be celebrated as it paves way for a new revaluation of values, such as the kind of values Nietzsche deems life-affirming.

Nietzsche is not entirely content with the death of the Christian God alone, he fears that Christianity has left enough legacy in Europe for it to be impossible to diminish so quickly. 'In the *fable of the madman* Nietzsche 'primarily attacks the adherents of secularised versions of the old Christian moral ideals' (Magnus & Higgins: 2003 p102). These people remain the audience of the *madman* and though secular are still conforming to the ideals influenced by Christianity. These ideals manifest themselves as "modern ideas" (for example liberalism, socialism and the politics of emancipation) and were by no means Christian as their supporters intended, but they were themselves expressions of the Christian ideal (Magnus & Higgins: 2003 p91). In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche Claims:

After Buddha was dead his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave - a tremendous gruesome shadow. God is dead, but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. And we still have to vanquish his shadow too. (*The Gay Science* 108)

Christian theology and ethics permeates in society in such a way that the Christian legacy is not replaced but transformed from one form to another and that does not please Nietzsche for the reason that a new revaluation of values is executed, just as the *slave morality* made their *first revaluation of values* to move from bad and good, to good and evil, respectively. A

revaluation Nietzsche opposes.

However, Nietzsche is confronted by a more severe obstacle than that of a slowly diminishing Christian ideal: and that is the insecurity of the future even with a new and positive revaluation of values which is that of collapse of the Christian tradition. How should the void left by the Christian ideal be filled? To refer to the passage above: what should come after the shadow of God is vanquished if anything at all? For Mitcheson, Nietzsche implies that: ‘when the individual realises that the world they have created is brought about by a psychological need, then a final form of nihilism takes place that which disbelieves the true world and the metaphysical one’ (Mitcheson: 2013 p73). Nietzsche may have diminished the artificial nihilism (-1) which he deems a polemic. He has done so by annihilating what is perceived to have had some value, in which case, the religious and moral ideals, with a positive type of nihilism (nihilism as a solution) But such an equation, leaves Nietzsche with a zero-sum: the cosmic nihilism (0). Nietzsche’s fragmental philosophy is dedicated putting forward an optimistic process for overcoming *nihilism* both artificial and cosmic. For Richard Schacht:

Nietzsche actually was a profound positive thinker, concerned above all to discover a way beyond the nihilistic reaction he believed to be the inevitable consequence of the impending collapse of traditional values and modes of interpretation, to a new ‘affirmation’ and ‘enchantment’ of life (Honderich (eds): 2003 p177).

The collapse of traditional values carries a nihilistic essence. As in face of the lifespan of society, the traditional values contingently had a beginning and an end. The most the demise of traditional values can do for Nietzsche is to rid itself but in so doing, it takes us back to (0) cosmic nihilism. Nietzsche must do more than that in order to create a structure for overcoming cosmic nihilism just as he tried to overcome the artificial nihilism (-1). It might be that traditional values are a good starting point which, for Nietzsche could at least be used as a means to an end and as something for his philosophy to lean on and to develop a process harnessed by ontological (cosmic or artificial) and methodological (polemical or annihilating) nihilisms. In order to do so Nietzsche will need a philosophical process.

### **Nihilism and Revaluation of Values as Historical Process**

The prerequisite to the association between the *themes* from polemic to solution is the infrastructure upon which these themes converge. Such an infrastructure is part of a process which forms a fourth dimension of Nietzsche’s *themes*. This process works through exchanging one theme for the other, which for Nietzsche would be a process of exchanging polemics for their solutions. What makes this process possible are the themes of *nihilism* and of the *revaluation of values*. Not only these two themes conform to the three-dimensional (polemical, prescriptive and descriptive) framework but they are themselves a process of transition which may be solely responsible for the transitioning of the *themes* of polemical to prescriptive. It could be argued that the concept of the *revaluation of values* may have been problematic enough for Nietzsche (in the same way as *nihilism*) to have attained ascetic ideals for the *slave morality* in *Genealogy*. In which case the *revaluation of values* has been viewed as polemical. It may be for Nietzsche a way of describing history and its change as a constant revaluation of values. Even *dialectic materialism* would have for Marx expressed a type of revaluation of

values and even Darwin's theory of evolution and adaptation may covertly express a revaluation as adaptation. The perceived positive outcome of the *revaluation of values* would be to scrutinize values (similar to Popper's *critical rationalism*) in order to refine values gradually (similar to *piecemeal social engineering*) and thus move closer and closer to higher sets of values. This would result in obtaining more than before the *will to power* and thus making the life of the individual more life-promoting.

One example for Nietzsche, would be to "revalue the values" by rejecting mass society and embracing the concept of the 'free spirit' might prove beneficial to the individual. However another example of the *revaluation of values*, for instance, the case with the *first revaluation of values* of the *ascetic priest (slave morality)* presents a problem for Nietzsche despite the fact that the workings out of the process of *the revaluation of values* itself is no different between cases. If a particular revaluation of values is viewed as polemical, it must be due to its content rather 'revaluation' itself as a process. A similar conclusion derives from *nihilism*, however since Nietzsche describes *nihilism* in different ways, it might be the substance or form of a particular type of nihilism which may have been overridden by its content which may have resulted in changing the essence of a particular type of nihilism and as a result *nihilism* according to its content rather than its form might be attributed a negative or a positive value. It may be that both *nihilism* (as we discussed above) and the *revaluation of values* have their own compass for making their own positive or negative (or merely being descriptive) judgements vis a vis their position. In a way, *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* are share similarities as being all: polemical, prescriptive and descriptive. Likewise, both themes purport towards a progressive process of eliminating what Nietzsche sees as negative and pursuing its opposite.

The successive challenge rests in finding a possible correlation between the *two themes*. The correlation is of paramount importance for as long as we are to argue that Nietzsche's philosophical process and his existentialism as a type of social engineering, must adhere to a structure in the same way that Popper has one in his philosophy. To do this, we must not only draw parallel similarities between the two themes, but must allow them to work together. Katrina Mitcheson in her book *Nietzsche, Truth and Transformation* (2013) purports to the connection between *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* as a process. For her, Nietzsche's notion of *nihilism* is intertwined with the will to truth. This will undermines the existence of a real world of objective value and as a result it leads to a crisis, which is that of *nihilism*. This is done through the destruction of morality 'which induces despair but it is rich in hope as it makes way for a revaluation of values' (Mitcheson: 2013 p72). Mitcheson argument allows for *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* to collaborate in the form of a process which uses the notion of *nihilism* in order to "annihilate" in this case some of Nietzsche's identified polemics and to offer a new revaluation as a substitute thereof.

The *revaluation of values* may deemed as a solution however, it must be noted that not every polemical theme of Nietzsche has a solution. Neither it is possible to interpret all the polemics and their corresponding solutions as connected through the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. There may be exceptions when a polemic and solution stand in a chronological relation to one another and when a polemic becomes annihilated (*nihilism*) which may lead to the growth in values (the revaluation of values) however speculative the values may be. As pointed out in the previous sections in the example of the Christian ethics

and slave morality undergo the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. However, for Nietzsche, the process alone is insufficient. Nietzsche implies that if we are to pursue a process for the trans-valuation of values, we must pursue a process which is progressive. In this way the process becomes responsible for the growth of values.

To put this to the test: the artificial ‘annihilation’ of ‘good’ and its *first revaluation of values* by the *ascetic priest* in *Genealogy* is more problematic for Nietzsche than cosmic nihilism. In Nietzsche’s own words: ‘A man would rather will nothingness than will nothing at all’<sup>33</sup> (*Genealogy* 3: 28). In this way *nihilism* moves from the value of zero to a negative value and that too dictates the values of the new revaluation from the *revaluation of values*. Nietzsche therefore, only pursues the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* which for him yield values that promote and affirm life and freedom to the individual. It does not mean to suggest that the genealogy of morality is not part of the process, and if morality was flawed by its genealogy, a gradual process of nihilism and revaluation of values which starts with the *first revaluation* from bad and good to good and evil, is also part of the process for the growth of values.

Such a process could also apply to the notion of *nihilism* in a historical and progressive sense. First, there was cosmic nihilism: the time before morality and religion, then it was eradicated by morality and religion (as Nietzsche describes): then it was replaced by an ideal, which later on was discovered to be in itself a type of nihilism, which in turn is to be overthrown by another type of nihilism and so forth. Such a process of social change might imply that although these nihilistic chronological processes are in themselves nihilistic, they are brought about by the need to grow values. This leads to the conclusion that these nihilisms are becoming less nihilistic than the previous ones in a way that scientific progress moves one step closer to either truth or technological advance or even energy efficiency. It could be argued that one of the different types of nihilism (which Nietzsche illustrates) is precisely a progressive type of nihilism which each time becomes more value efficient just in the same way that each successor production of a machine would be less inefficient than its predecessor. The same can be said about the other aspect of the Nietzschean process, which is the *revaluation of values*. Values devalue themselves, but whilst in a progressive process, they do so in exchange for higher values.

Nietzsche tries to overcome *nihilism* by partially embracing it in the form of a process. It is the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* as shown above allow the reader to see how values are evaluated and devaluated. This process in no way claims to be governed by any apparent historical law. It simply observes the way in which the individual tries to overcome nihilism and that includes Nietzsche himself. This makes room for the individual break free from inhibitions many of which lie in social structures for which a type of social engineering is needed. Nietzsche’s existentialist philosophy begins to hold social engineering qualities, the question is whether this is sufficient to formulate an existentialist social engineering which would guard the individual from confrontation with different types of nihilism which could emerge.

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<sup>33</sup> Directed at the *ascetic priest*

## Nietzsche's Process and the Politics of Identity

So far in this chapter, we have discussed the possibility of a Nietzschean process which applies the gradual rejection (nihilism) of certain doctrines and some reconsideration (revaluation) for the successor values. The question here is: what would Nietzsche's process look like within the politics of identity? In hindsight, Nietzsche's philosophy has created a bad reputation particularly by the way the National Socialist Party sought its inspiration by some of Nietzsche's philosophy. Even without taking into account the fascist admiration for Nietzsche's philosophy, we often find *themes* in Nietzsche's philosophy which do not seem to be in any way compatible with the idea of equality and liberalism in general. Many supporters of identity politics would find some of Nietzsche's themes, insulting. To take the 'master/slave morality' as an example, Nietzsche would be criticized for insulting a particular group of people who have been oppressed, marginalized and made deprived and disadvantaged by another group whether that be deliberately or not. The right to seek social justice is reduced by Nietzsche as envy and resentment by this group who are then labelled 'slave moralists'.

In response to these allegations, Nietzsche does not directly criticize the feelings of resentment, neither does he set up conditions under which resentment may be justified<sup>34</sup>. Nietzsche, simply shows us how the type of morality which is polarized between good and evil may have originated, through the *first revaluation of values* and *ressentment*. It is possible that this type of morality is also heuristic rather than hereditary as one's lifetime is sufficient for proceeding from bad and good to good and evil, respectively. If the subdued group in *Genealogy* did not proceed with the *first revaluation of values* moral judgements into good and evil may not have happened at all. In a sense, Nietzsche is mimicking the Book of Genesis describing the Fall by giving us an explanation about the nature of morality whether that be heuristic or hereditary. Therefore, all that Nietzsche rejects, is the *first revaluation of values*. This implies that Nietzsche would strongly advise an oppressed group not to surrender with *the first revaluation of values* but to perhaps continue the revolt, unlike the 'slave moralists'.

The revolt in question, can be coherent with the process of optimizing what life gives to the individual whether that be the will to power or justice and equality. As far as Nietzsche's existentialism is concerned, the life-promoting endeavours should be pursued by all and that includes pursuing different aspects of social justice, particularly the equality through the diversity of access such as in higher education or in a particular industry. In an ontological sense, Nietzsche's existentialism related to the politics of identity. Moreover, if we are to look at the type of methodology we discussed above, *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*, we see a consistency between such a process and the aims of the politics of identity. For instance, the revolt against normativism shows a nihilistic spirit. The 'annihilism'(positive nihilism) of values which are deemed polemical is represented by being sought the progressivist liberation groups. In turn, the *poly-tribalist progressivism* or the liberation groups seek to overthrow the *mono-tribalist normativism* which is nihilistic for as long as it is life-negating to the liberation groups. In so doing, the substance of the society is moving from a set of values (normativism) to a new revaluation of values (diversity and social justice). Nietzsche's process anticipates to be constantly seeking a new revaluation of values with its *two themes*. It implies that *poly-*

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<sup>34</sup> For instance, some may argue resentful feeling can be justified for as long as they respond to a zero-sum game where the resentful individual feels subdued. In contrast, when there is no zero-sum game, resentful feelings are nothing more than the feelings of envy, might argue some.

*tribalist progressivism* would eventually be scrutinized by the process in search for higher values.

So far, we looked at the possible process for a Nietzschean philosophy as a chronological critical assessment of values. We applied Nietzsche's process through *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* to the politics of identity. We found that, though Nietzsche continues to receive a critical reception for his bad reputation, Nietzsche has also received praise for his contribution of what has come to be known as postmodernism. The process of Nietzsche's *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* conforms to the postmodernist ethos. Consequently, Nietzsche would endorse his philosophy in favour of the liberation groups to further the individual's pursuit for life-affirming freedoms. The next chapter, combines Nietzsche and Popper together, where such an affinity will be practically tested within the politics of identity.



## Chapter 7: Nietzsche and Popper Incorporated

So far we have introduced the politics of identity and the issues the liberation groups seek to tackle. We find that a liberal, tolerant and socially just society, resembles the broad definition of the open society. Therefore, it could already be concluded that, the liberation groups seek an open society. Furthermore, we have also found that, the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper appeal for an open society, though both philosophers take a different approach in their philosophy. Nietzsche seeks to find solution to his polemics through the processes of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*, to further the affirmation of life. Popper on the other hand, applies his philosophy of science to promote the open society, piecemeal. To summarise the two philosophical processes simultaneously in parallel: Nietzsche's process starts with *perspectivism* where there can be ontological errors and Popper with fallibility, where there can be epistemological errors. Nietzsche proceeds with an 'annihilistic' critique and Popper with *critical rationalism*. Nihilism seeks a revaluation of values in Nietzsche and the effect of *critical rationalism* (falsification) leads to the growth in scientific knowledge. Furthermore, Nietzsche's repetitive process develops into *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* and Popper's repetitive process develops into *piecemeal social engineering*. Consequently, Nietzsche's *two themes* support the affirmation of life and Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* supports the *open society*.

Subsequently we looked at how Nietzsche and Popper individually correlate with the politics of identity with some conditions for its compatibility. Nietzsche would support the open society of the liberation groups for as long as the latter break free from the life-negating structures, namely, *normativist mono-tribalism*. Popper on the other hand, supports the liberation groups through his *piecemeal social engineering*, for as long as liberation group's claims are socio-scientific and further the democratic freedom of the individual, whilst being open to scrutiny (*critical rationalism*). Even if we are to see the liberation groups as *poly-tribalist progressivism*, for Popper, we should favour this kind of tribalism over the *mono-tribalist normativism*. Eventually, *piecemeal social engineering* should be able to gradually mitigate tribalism. Thus establishing a parallel comparison between the two philosophies.

However, unlike in Popper, Nietzsche's process is not complete to be regarded as an existentialist social engineering without taking into consideration Nietzsche's account of the *Übermensch*. This chapter explores the concept of the *Übermensch* as an application to Nietzsche's process, Popper's process and the politics of identity. The concept of the *Übermensch* may prove beneficial to the liberation groups when 'poly-tribalism' becomes obsolete. It may be able to offer a new domain to the liberation groups by supporting its *ethic character* at the expense of its *aesthetic character* (as discussed in Chapter 2). This also gives the concept of the *Übermensch*, the opportunity for a new covenant with the liberation groups which hitherto has generally been dismissed as totally incompatible. The notion of the *Übermensch* will be reviewed by giving the '*Über-mensch*' a literal definition as 'the overcomer'. Where the 'over-dweller' corresponds to 'sur-viver'.

Now that we have established that the philosophies of Nietzsche and Popper can offer a substantial contribution to the politics of identity, the next step is to try to merge Nietzsche and Popper together within the politics of identity. So far, we have converged the two philosophers in their critique of metaphysics and the process of ‘orthodoxy and heresy’ and repetitive effect. On this occasion we are trying to merge Nietzsche’s existential philosophy with Popper’s *open society* which as a process may prove beneficial to one another, and to name a few: a) Incorporating a political philosophy consisting of Popper’s *open society* and Nietzsche’s existentialism. b) Safeguarding Popper’s *open society* from becoming obsolete c) Finding a breeding ground for Nietzsche’s existentialism in order for it to flourish into a practical philosophy for the future. In which case an existentialist social engineering might have found a “client”, Popper’s *open society* and open societies alike. This might also allow Nietzsche’s fragmental philosophy to find a practical use. d) Strengthening the arguments in favour of the liberation groups which in return praise the synergy of the two philosophical processes. e) Trying to look into the future of an open society free from any form of tribalism and the kind of new issues that may arise subsequently.

### **Determining the Undetermined**

Previously, we discussed how Nietzsche and Popper have built their philosophies on what they already find in real life and academia, namely, metaphysics and the actors who broadly support metaphysical claims the two philosophers find polemical. In a sense, their philosophies build on what Nietzsche and Popper have already found, rather than offering anything new. Other findings purport towards the idea that the society is by nature undetermined and as a result Nietzsche and Popper demarcate between the types of social facts which are deterministic and those which are not. One apparent characteristic of the undetermined social facts is the randomness of the social and historical development. Roy Jackson maintains that Nietzsche particularly in *Human all too Human* (1878) saw truth as belonging to a culture, a language, a historical period rather than some Platonic supernatural quest (Jackson: 1992 p32). This can easily fit into Popper's critique of *historicism* where historicists claim that, there must be universal historical laws which determine historical events and even bind them together in the form of the categorisation of historical events as being brought about by certain principles within the speculative laws of history. Both philosophies purport to the possibility of indeterminism of the individual.

Though Nietzsche and Popper highlight as polemical certain factors or deterministic social facts (i.e. religious and moral obligation for Nietzsche; prophesy and tyranny for Popper) which hold the society back, these factors are presented as surmountable. This may be because, when Nietzsche and Popper look at the social world they find many social *phenomena* as capable of self-healing, self-improving and self-sufficient. To take for example, the statements: values devalue themselves and falsification leads to the growth of scientific knowledge. For that reason, their philosophies share a dualist nature of being both descriptive and prescriptive. The two philosopher’s covertly justify their philosophies as mere interpretations of the way society progresses from what is already in the society. Certain social *phenomena* have the tendency to progress according to the intentions of society and its trends. The intentions may be the *will to power* or the will to knowledge and freedom. For as long as Nietzsche and Popper identify this pattern of the social life, their philosophies are descriptive. However, the two philosophers may

not be content with being mere observers. When they are not social observers, they are instead, social engineers. But a new problem arises. If there is nothing more to the existentialism of Nietzsche and the *open society* of Popper, than their interpretation of the development of the society, then the two philosophers cannot offer any type of social engineering as they cannot add anything new to the society.

Nietzsche and Popper's possible social engineerings rest on the awareness of finding a pattern in society such as the revaluation of values or growth on scientific knowledge and making the individual aware that once we find what appears to be beneficial to the individual, we must pursue those means which are the most effective. After all, it is neither Popper nor the social scientist who falsify certain socio-scientific statements. Likewise, it is not Nietzsche who falsifies the possibility of absolute values. Nietzsche and Popper's social engineerings prompt the individual to repeat successful outcomes that further the individual's freedom. For Nietzsche, the individual, must avoid life-negating actions and instead seek life-promoting ones through *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. For Popper, the individual must avoid and 'critically rationalise' (scrutinize) the belief systems that give no falsifiable explanation as to why they should be pursued at the expense of freedoms and of the open society. Furthermore, once a single process has led to success, then the individual should possess the ambition for further success in overcoming nihilism or opening up the society. Nietzsche and Popper can be deemed social engineers only in a 'technological sense' (as discussed in Chapter 4). It is the technological nature that elevates Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies from being descriptive. Nietzsche and Popper must work together to "technologically innovate" their social engineerings.

### **Fortress Open Society**

The motivation behind the association between Nietzsche and Popper must be taken into account. Popper's *open society* is in need of a "guardian" able to maintain the *open society* open. Existentialism should be able to facilitate that, so long as it prioritises individual identity over collective identity where the latter could unwittingly result in tribalism. Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* invites Nietzsche's existentialism easily as both philosophers' methodologies have enough in common. In order for Nietzsche to come to the aid of Popper, the former's philosophy must be able to offer what the latter's does not: individuality. It is precisely by looking at the open society from an individualist point of view that we can associate the open society with the politics of identity. This may be because the open society can mean a number of things. It is sufficient to refer to a society as 'open', for as long as it is free from tyranny only; free from poverty only; free from conflict only; free from dogmatism only; etc. Existentialism brings to the discussion the possibility of seeing the open society in the terms of individuality whereby the opposite thereof refers to the closed society of tribalism and sectarianism.

Some would argue that Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* alone is what makes Popper's own account of the *open society* so peculiar. It is an ever opening society through *piecemeal social engineering* which gives Popper's *open society* a character and at the same time gradually moves away from the *enemies'* ideologies such as the historicist utopian social engineering and the Platonic utopias. The piecemeal process ensures that however slow, the society is moving in the right direction, just in the same way that once a hypothesis is falsified,

it can no longer be corroborated as there is no reversing process. In this way Popper's *open society* may not need any additional philosophies, as *piecemeal social engineering* is self-sufficient. However, Popper's *open society* may be in need of some form of existentialism should it seek to appeal to the liberation groups and the same time during the process of its *critical rationalism*, rejects the liberation group's tribalistic nature, once poly-tribalism becomes obsolete. Once the tribalistic nature of the liberation groups (poly-tribalism) becomes obsolete when the issues concerning social justice are fully addressed, theoretically speaking, the society becomes free from all tribalism.

Though some issues in the open society are surmountable, certain issues concerning the individual are not always resolvable by assistance of a third party such as political activism. Instead, new methods for new challenges would be needed. Should Popper's *open society* seek to avoid being obsolete post-tribalism, its longevity can be supported by the adoption of the expertise of other philosophies. Existentialism may be able to offer some assistance to the post-tribalist stage of the *open society* by focusing directly on the individual. Even when observing the individual alone, we find old challenges in new domains, in this case in the personal domain. Just as there was a conflict between tribes, there is also a conflict within the self. A new type of social engineering, 'personal engineering' is needed post-tribalism.

### **Personal Engineering and *Übermensch***

In the post-tribalist era, we can give existentialism the benefit of the doubt for being able to maintain the opening up of the society within the individual. Nietzsche's philosophy purports to a futuristic philosophy, which may be so, for two main reasons: First, his philosophy is set in a prophetic tone, as 'future descriptive'. For instance Nietzsche makes prophetic claims about the coming of the *Übermensch* and the *eternal recurrence*. Second, Nietzsche's ideas came to prominence after his death. Although his posthumous philosophy acquired notoriety as an inspiration to the Nazis, Nietzsche's usefulness of his philosophy remains to be discovered and explored over time. This assumption appears intriguing in a sense that Nietzsche's philosophy may have come too early in history for it to be "decrypted" and the polemical nature of his critiques might suggest that Nietzsche had a profound vision into the future with a persistent quest for solutions. This does not necessarily imply Nietzsche was as prophetic as the historicists, if he did he would be another *enemy* of the open society. But we do not need to see Nietzsche as prophetic at all. We could see his "futurism" in the terms of an anticipating thinker who finds his polemics quite concerning for as long as the polemics will inevitably may result in problems. Nietzsche, justifies the inevitability of the negative effect of some of his polemics by looking at their genealogy and by making *ad hominem* arguments against them.

What we could see as "futuristic" in his philosophy without accusing Nietzsche of prophesy, are the assumptions that the human condition is subject to change and therefore it is possible to break freely to a more life-promoting way of life than before. As discussed earlier many of the polemics presented by Nietzsche and Popper have a surmountable nature. By giving an example such as the *Übermensch* as to what the individual can change into – and the way to do that, the individual must be able to overcome the negative traits of the "all-too-human" condition. In order to facilitate an additional process to his existentialist social engineering, Nietzsche appoints the character of Zarathustra to promote the *Übermensch* similarly to

promoting a product in the market. Zarathustra “markets” the *Übermensch* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883) as a prototype individual who represents Nietzsche’s ideal individual. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* a graphic novel in style, is dedicated to Nietzsche’s fictional hero Zarathustra who is a solitary prophet, outspoken on a number of issues concerning the individual and their relationship to life (and only this life) and how the individual could personify the *Übermensch* for their own benefit.

Like in other *themes*: the *will to power*, *eternal recurrence* and *slave morality*, Nietzsche’s view of the *Übermensch* is ambiguous as he does not explicitly define the *Übermensch* in a Darwinian sense as the by-product of the future evolution of human kind or whether, one can become *Übermensch* in their lifetime. It is worth mentioning is that, Nietzsche at least does show some evidence of prescribing the attainment of *Übermensch* as a personal merit in the book, rather than a prediction about the future advantages that evolution may bring about. ‘I teach you the *Übermensch*. Man is something to be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: Book I, 3) Zarathustra tells the crowd when he returns from solitude. Nietzsche is appealing directly to the reader with a view to prompt them to engage in their own obligation to oneself about self-mastery, self-overcoming and the affirmation of their own lives. For this reason and well as the conclusions drawn in Chapter 4 (discussing the ambiguous nature of the *themes* of the *will to power*, the *eternal recurrence* and *slave morality*), we should have no intention to treat the *Übermensch* other than in a figurative sense.

Much of the disagreement amongst scholars also lies in the definition of the “*Übermensch*”. Many scholars translate it as “beyond-man”, “overman”, or “superhuman”. The name Nietzsche gives to the *Übermensch*, must reflect on their essence. As we have already seen in the previous chapters, Nietzsche’s polemics often are solved by the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. Because Nietzsche produces little literature on the *Übermensch*, we can only define them in relation to Nietzsche’s philosophy. For as long as we are to maintain that Nietzsche philosophy embraces the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*, the *Übermensch* must also be part of the same process. Here the *Übermensch* is present in every step of the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. In a sense *Übermensch* is the personification of the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. The reason why the *Übermensch* is not included in the parallel alignment of the developmental processes of Nietzsche and Popper’s philosophies, is that Popper does not have the personified equivalent. This is not a problem as this personification in Nietzsche, by virtue of their close alignment with Popper’s process, can relocate into the *open society*. The benefit of the appearance of the *Übermensch* in the *open society*, is that personification alone, empowers the *open society* and its *piecemeal social engineering* with Nietzsche’s existentialist social engineering as an incarnation of the latter into the former. The benefit is two-fold. It appoints an authority to *open society* and thus some autonomy and self-determination. Second, it also draws the *open society* and its *piecemeal social engineering* to some form of incarnation which can enforce some social engineering into the individual in the form of ‘personal engineering’. As a result, the personified *piecemeal social engineering*, may continue to flourish post-tribalism.

## Identity Politics of *Übermensch*

As discussed above, one of the dimensions of the synergy between Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering and Popper's *piecemeal social engineering* is that the *Übermensch* prolongs the *open society* post-tribalism. Does the demise of tribalism imply the demise of the politics of identity? The poly-tribalistic essence of the liberation groups may only become obsolete when the polemics concerning identity and social injustice are resolved. In that way, there is no tribalism (of ethic character) as long as there is no 'woke' activism. However, it does imply that the open society of the liberation groups can only be so without any demographic attributes. As discussed in Chapter 2, assimilation including social mobility diminish the aesthetic character of the politics of identity without affecting its ethic character. The problem that arises here, is that by flourishing the ethic character of the politics of identity, the aesthetic character diminishes, social mobility is one example. As a result, we find a society where the issues of social injustice are less severe (ethic character) but the demographic attributes become subtle (aesthetic character). But in order to address the issues of the ethic character of the politics of identity, we risk reverting to an utopian social engineering society of large scale social planning. This may cause a reversing process towards aesthetic mono-tribalism, where not only 'mono-tribalism' re-emerges but also the *mono-tribalsit normativism* - but only for the aesthetic character. This event does not deem the *open society* successful least because it invites what Popper already rejects, namely utopian social engineering.

In order for the *open society* to be successful, there must be a piecemeal mechanism from mono-tribalism to poly-tribalism to individuality, both in an ethic and an aesthetic sense and without any form of regress. What could safeguard the *open society* from the possible regression, is the enforcement of 'personal engineering' in the personification of the *Übermensch*. The role of the *Übermensch* is not assigned for eradicating poly-tribalism, together with the politics of identity. *Peacemeal social engineering* alone is capable of doing just that by obsolescence not by obliteration. The *Übermensch* is invited by *critical rationalism* in order to for the *open society* to proceed to the next stage: that of 'personal engineering'. The *Übermensch* is needed to represent the *open society* within the individual.

How would the *Übermensch* assist the liberation groups or anyone for that matter? The main challenge is to repair its image impaired by fascist admiration. The *Übermensch* has been understood as the ideal individual who is devoid of any compassion and who is able to fulfil their desires with disregard to social norms (in a moral sense). In other words the *Übermensch* is someone who is anti-social and depraved. Nietzsche saw the *Übermensch* in himself, but despite his notoriety, Nietzsche is not understood as a person of bad character. Instead he often saw himself persecuted by his poor physical and eventually mental health and unable to create lasting romantic relationships. It may be that his *perspectivism* of his own struggle might have been the cause of the pessimistic and resentful personality making him express arrogance, misogyny, apathy, hierarchy, etc.

To generate an image for the *Übermensch* we should look at Nietzsche's personality, life and works. We would find the characteristics of an individual trying to come to terms with their plight, instead of someone who leads a hedonistic life. We would also find a survivor who is trying to alleviate their plight, instead of a wrong doer. Even the term *Übermensch* gives us some unlikely clues. Though the *Übermensch* is broadly translated as the charismatic and privileged individual (in an extra-moral sense), taking a closer look might give us a different

meaning. We would find that, the German translation of the '*über-mensch*' as the 'over-human' could also be deciphered as: 'human-that-goes-over' which can be simplified as 'overcomer'. Also, the statement: 'human-that-goes-over' may be synonymous with 'dweller-that-goes-over' or 'over-dweller' or 'over-liver'. If we are to look at a number of foreign languages including the modern dialects of Latin, we find that a combination of the word 'over' and the word 'live' can be broadly translated into the modern Latin dialects as 'sur-vive'. It is therefore possible that *übermensch* also refers to 'survivor'.

Looking at Nietzsche's personality and the possible deciphering of '*übermensch*' as 'survivor' we find a humble individual who is preoccupied with overcoming their plight. In order to test this conclusion against Nietzsche's process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*, we find that the humble *Übermensch* corresponds with Nietzsche's process as their task of overcoming and affirmation. In turn, the *Übermensch* also relates to the members of liberation groups, as overcomers and survivors. In the post-tribalist open society, new challenges come to light. These challenges may not be new but new to the individual's attention. A liberation group's support is limited to the outside of the individual. In this case, there is little any third party can do, (including the liberation groups and the open society) in support of the individual in question.

This may be because, some of the problems affecting members of the liberation groups are, profoundly esteemed within the self and can only be resolved within. The *Übermensch* might be able to address the problem by directly assessing a revaluation of values from within. The values become even more personal when they are deemed subjective. The subjectivity of values enables the individual to carry out their own assessment, and also with the help of nihilism. In this event, nihilism acts as an annihilating the will, similar to the denial of the *will* in Schopenhauer. The individual realises since the values in question are of personal nature, so is their revaluation and the individual feels more in control of this revaluation (in the Sartrean notion of 'anguish'). Furthermore, some values within the self are positioned in conflict with one another. It is the *Übermensch* who can respond to a conflict within itself as if it were inter-tribal.

Though 'personal engineering' was not intended to topple the politics of identity, the latter's scrutiny may speed up its depreciation process. But when it does so, it leaves the individual within the same process, but this time in solitude. If 'personal engineering' is to be seen as at odds with the politics of identity, it does not mean that 'personal engineering' is at odds with the members of liberation groups. It transcends the politics of identity and patiently awaits for the latter to proceed to the post-tribalist stage. If the 'political' is 'personal' then 'personal engineering' can penetrate where the politics of identity cannot. What the *Übermensch* cannot do is to promote social justice and equality. As a result, 'personal engineering' operates from within and the politics of identity from outside. However, in the open society of the future, the former will continue, when the latter becomes obsolete.

## Synergic and Peculiar

This thesis staged a productive dialogue between Nietzsche and Popper in the context of the politics of identity. The aim was to find a synergy between the philosophies of the two thinkers. The thesis began with an alignment of the philosophical process of Nietzsche and Popper and eventually tested their affinity in the context of the politics of identity. It may not be visible to find any synergy for as long as Nietzsche and Popper can separately make a substantial contribution to the politics of identity, without the need for one another. Nietzsche's process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values* with *Übermensch* as a personified dimension would be sufficient for the politics of identity without Popper. Likewise, Popper's *open society* and its *piecemeal social engineering*, alone would be sufficient to assist the politics of identity.

There must be something peculiar about Nietzsche and Popper held together for a synergy to be possible. The beginning of this chapter listed a number of aspects (from a to e) of this productive dialogue, which may amount to a synergy between Nietzsche and Popper as necessary motives for merging the two. But to sum up, the different synergic dimensions: Nietzsche and Popper together, offer a synergy for a social engineering which is political by nature (applicable to the politics of identity), grounded in an ever opening society (Popper) and perpetuated by the personification (Nietzsche) of the open society's own defence mechanism. The open society inherits stages of its own growth from the synergy, akin to the growth of values and of scientific knowledge. The synergy gives the open society a metamorphic character from 'the collective' to the 'personal' in the form of an evolution. It is precisely the peculiarity of the synergy that grants the open society a "biological" character in the form of ensoulment and its coming of age.



## Conclusion

This thesis aimed at establishing a strong connection between the continental philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the analytic philosopher Karl Popper. To be more precise, establishing a connection between Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering and Popper's *piecemeal social engineering*. I believed that finding common grounds from within and outside the two philosophers' works would strengthen my argument that Nietzsche and Popper have enough in common to be able to 'collaborate'. I tried to align Nietzsche and Popper's philosophies by presenting their work in the order of their developmental process.

I found that Nietzsche and Popper construct their philosophies from their criticism, though the two philosophers focus on different areas of philosophy. What both had in common was the independent critique of metaphysics which for Nietzsche had to be eliminated and for Popper demarcated. Another common process in their philosophical development was what I call the process of orthodoxy and heresy, where Nietzsche and Popper reject an orthodox view and at the same time explain how a heretic view might have come about. In turn the new heretic antithesis becomes a new orthodoxy which is subject to scrutiny to repeat the process. This type of process which differs from *dialectic materialism*, is particularly evident in Nietzsche's view on nihilism and Popper's view on falsification. I mentioned these two as they are the components of their philosophical process which recur throughout the process and by so doing they give Nietzsche and Popper's philosophical process a technological nature with social engineering capabilities, similar to a machinery with the task of repetitively overseeing a process according to certain manufacturing standards.

By taking into account the methodological similarities of the two philosophers (orthodoxy and heresy) on the one hand, and on the other, some of the foundations for their philosophical development, namely, nihilism and falsification I was able to present two philosophical developments from Nietzsche and Popper as aligned. To reiterate, Nietzsche and Popper's process for the development of their philosophies lie in the following order: First there is *perspectivism/critical rationalism*; then nihilism and falsification; then the *revaluation of values*/the growth of scientific knowledge; then the *two themes* as process/*piecemeal social engineering*, respectively.

Nietzsche and Popper's developmental process as listed above and their orthodoxy and heresy process was able to assist the politics of identity by advising in the form of social engineering the course of action to take when responding to some of the challenges in society. To be more precise the challenges from the polemics of social injustice in the society. The progressive driving force in the politics of identity are the liberation groups, who seek to open up the society by promoting social justice among diverse demographic groups. What Nietzsche and Popper's philosophical process was able to achieve within the politics of identity was to interpret the struggle between *mono-tribalism normativism* and *poly-tribalist progressivism* in terms of the orthodoxy and heresy process. This process can be individually translated as the process of *nihilism* and the *valuation of values*, and the process of *piecemeal social engineering*, where the latter defeats the former and makes room for its own scrutiny.

The limits of Nietzsche and Popper's philosophical process for the politics of identity were set in their parallel alignment. Neither of the two processes can accompany the diverse open society beyond their poly-tribalist nature. The most they were able to do was remain active until poly-tribalism becomes obsolete and that requires the full solution to the social problems regarding identity and social injustice in particular. Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering was incomplete without the concept of the *Übermensch*. The role of this character within Nietzsche's philosophy was to personify the process of *nihilism* and the *revaluation of values*. Whereas in relation to both, the politics of identity and Popper's *open society*, the role of the *Übermensch* was to offer some personal engineering when all tribalism becomes obsolete.

In the last chapter, we saw the process of an internal conflict within the self. We found that there was a clash between the rational and the irrational habits of the self. This presented a new stage of 'personal' nihilism. The *Übermensch* appealed to the individual in their capacity as the overcomer or even a survivor. During the process of overcoming of the self, we found the struggle between contradictory desires and the struggle with affirmation, where the duel within the self resembles a tribalistic clash.

All these processes, form a system of orientation between social and personal change against the cost of change, measured in our capacity to attain the highest ratings possible for our values. Such an assertion can have some practical use in the politics of identity and beyond. The question that makes this thesis worth writing is as follows: During the gradual processes we outlined in the thesis is there a synergy between Nietzsche's existentialist social engineering and Popper's *open society* with its *piecemeal social engineering*?

The synergy I have found, is limited to three aspects: First, the whole comparison between Nietzsche and Popper, throughout the thesis produces some synergy. That striking similarities purport towards a pattern for inevitable progress boosted by both a continental and an analytic philosopher. Second, Nietzsche was able to bind his fragments into a robust philosophy as an existentialist social engineering with its refuge in the *open society*, was able to (at least) repair some of his negative reputation. Popper's *open society* was able to recruit the *Übermensch* so that it would also perform in unusual locations such as in and around the individual outside of society as personal engineering. Last but not least, the synergy culminates in growth of the understanding of historical and social change and it merited technological social engineering. This way of understanding was accomplished by giving the Nietzsche and Popper's philosophical processes a dual aspect dimension which can be interpreted either in the terms of Nietzsche or in terms of Popper.

The synergy sums up in the attainment of a quasi-biological character of the open society – where 'personal engineering' of the *Übermensch* personifies the open society and the evolutionary nature of the open society from 'the collective' to the 'personal' signifies a rite of passage. Either type of social engineering may have an equal impact on an open society and its ever overcoming inhabitants. But the synergy between Nietzsche and Popper allows the open society to grow together with its inhabitants.

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